

**Constructing vertical visions:
Cataract Gorge – a visual exploration
of space, place and perception**

Submitted by
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Statement of originality

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Abstract

A climber's way of seeing concentrates on verticality, with its varied and radical viewpoints. Cliff surfaces are seen in close proximity with intense points of focus. Kinaesthetic and corporeal knowledge interacts with cultural, imaginative, metaphoric and psychological dimensions, all informing a climber's perceptions. This project responds to these experiences and concepts about place-making revealed through climbing and painting, as performative actions and representation. More specifically it explores the contribution of my perceptions and experiences as a rock climber to the construction of paintings of a locality, Cataract Gorge, a site of personal and cultural significance.

In the construction of vertical views, the performative function of the image is highlighted through the bodily enactment of climbing movements and in the activity of materials and painting processes. Pictorial strategies extend traditional Western landscape representations, particularly conventions of the picturesque. Histories of representation of human/nature relationships involving climbing, heights or high places and concepts of the vertical sublime and the vertical imagination inform visual investigations.

Initial paintings explored verticality through manipulation of format, composition and negative space that repositioned the artist's/viewer's point of view. Ink paintings on paper simulating the experience of verticality through the format of the work were developed in series and exhibited in traditional gallery style. The kinetic, expressive and responsive qualities of ink were emphasized with a focus on tactility, reflecting a climber's intimate, temporal and sensory encounter with a site. Osmotic drying processes, the effects of gravity and directional movement reference both the dynamics of the site and those between a climber and a place.

Analysis of paintings using photography as an investigative tool led to greater emphasis on the expressive potential of materiality and the spaces between components of painting. The actual walls act as a ground for the elements significant to a climber, which are cut out and pasted directly on the architectural surfaces in differing contexts. This breakdown of the frame challenged pictorial conventions and generated new ways of activating gallery spaces. These innovations marked a performative shift from how a place is seen to how a place is experienced by a climber, extending specific views into open speculation.

The visual field references the related methodologies and concepts but contrasting mediums of Thomas Cooper and Dan Shipsides. Artists' depictions of localities where I have climbed – by Von Guerard, Carleton Watkins, a traditional Chinese ink landscape scroll painting and Sidney Nolan – are used to differentiate and clarify my aims. Representations extending beyond singular views to multiple viewpoints include works by William Robinson, Tim Burns, Nancy Spero and Bea Maddock. Paintings by Lui Guo Song, Richard Kimberly and Neil Frazer influenced experimentation with the expressive potential in ink and negative spaces. Work by Christl Berg and Nancy Spero informed site specific and gallery based installations.

The importance of the vertical vision, beyond challenging the Western landscape view, is its focus on the relationship between the physicality of both painting and climbing as a metaphor for the corporeal dimension of the experience of a place. The work opens up the encounter with space and place through a realignment of the perceptual field to that of the unique bodily experience of the climber.

Introduction

Looking upward at the cliff face looming in front of me, I feel my foot moving slightly in the crack I have wedged it into. I scan the next moves to the top and focus on a small ledge, just out of reach. Reaching and adjusting my weight sideways, I notice a small plant clinging from a fine crack, improbable and precarious in its location, echoing my position. Fingertips stretch and grope for the best way to hold, feeling the shape and textural variations hard on my fingertips. I remember to breathe and pull up working the edge with my hands, as I will my feet to stick long enough to reposition. Aware of a surge of adrenaline and the need to move quickly against tiring muscles, I commit to the dynamic sequence of body movements required to find myself at the top. Once over the lip, I clip in and relax slightly as I call 'safe' to my belayer below and rearrange ropes and anchors. The rope moves through my hand as my friend follows me up, I contemplate the name of the climb 'Cowardice' as appropriate, the type of climb requiring a bold approach, where fear and hesitation will lead to falling off. I watch my friend's ascent from this aerial viewpoint, thinking how different it looks from above, with extended time to observe details in geology and vegetation. A lizard pops in and out of a crack and I listen to the unusually loud cicada noise as my heart rate and breathing gradually return to rest. Watching tourists on the main Cataract Gorge Main walk watch us, I think of the difference in seeing and experience of place from this intimate and vertical perspective and how such experiences enrich my life. I wonder how it is possible to communicate this unique way of seeing a place.

A climber's way of seeing has a focus on verticality, with varied viewpoints including looking up and down, through, within and scanning surfaces. Cliffs are seen at close proximity, with emphasis on the tactile. Rock features and subtle changes in geology are important. There are intense points of focus with depth of field effects. Modulations in rock surface become focal points with emphasis on features that are immediate or just out of reach. A climber's way of seeing is informed by kinaesthetic and corporeal knowledge. Memories of bodily positions and sequences of movement in space and the feeling of holds on hands and feet contribute. Fear of falling, tension and effortful, explosive movements are interspersed with periods of inactivity while observing the environment and planning next moves. Cultural, imaginative, metaphoric and psychological dimensions inform a climber's perceptions.

Cataract Gorge, in Launceston, Tasmania, is a site of personal and cultural significance with layers of meanings simultaneously interacting. As a rock climber, my experiences of this place have specific perceptual and physical engagement with the landscape. Sitting on cliff edges for extended periods of time, looking up and looking down, has allowed me to observe the site from an unusual perspective and to reflect on a climber's way of seeing a place.

How can my perceptions and experiences as a climber in a specific locality contribute to the construction of paintings about that place?

The vertical way of perceiving or seeing the landscape offers a source for visual explorations which examine spatiality in ways that extend traditional landscape representations. In *Constructing vertical visions: Cataract Gorge – a visual exploration of space, place and perception* I investigate verticality with manipulations of format, composition and negative space within paintings. A radical repositioning of the artist's/viewer's point of view is explored using scale, orientation and spatial arrangements reminiscent of a climber's perceptions in a cliff environment. I aim to examine how these spatial factors can influence the construction and reception of paintings which explore a climber's way of seeing and experiences of a site, and how the use of materials can communicate the particularities of a locality and ways of encountering a place as a climber.

The intertextual relationship between climbing and painting creates meaning and informs performative actions in the painting of a place. The socially and culturally constructed nature of these meanings is acknowledged and informs making processes in the studio. Limitations, implications and advantages of using painting to examine a climber's experience of a place have also been considered.

The project connects with key themes in Western art using Cataract Gorge as a case study or microcosm for exploring broader aesthetic and philosophical concerns regarding representation of place. These include: landscape as a cultural construct, topography, landscape and politics, various practices of framing landscape, and ideas about the sublime, the picturesque and aesthetics. Using the specific examples of climbing and painting, my project explores some of the mechanisms through which humans construct meanings and relationships with natural environments.

My research is embedded in the site itself. Cataract Gorge is constituted of a particular mix of animals, plants and topography that are the specific effects of the complex physical processes in a locality, intertwined with local practices (current and historical) of humans. Matthew Watson (2003, p. 146) notes how nature reserves appear as very 'local' places. He describes how nature reserves paradoxically only continue to exist as distinctive local spaces because they exist as standardized representations such as in species lists and data in land management systems, within a universalized context. Watson's example illustrates how the meanings of a particular local space are distributed into national and international circuits of knowledge. Parallel processes exist in representations of places through the medium of painting, where picturing of distinctive localities is connected to broader cultural ways of representing land. Anne-Marie Willis (1993) describes how landscape

painting is often seen as unique and home-grown because of its links to particularities of place and is therefore promoted as a sign of local achievement or distinctiveness. Such strategies can be also seen in promotional material for tourism where iconic places such as Cataract Gorge are used to represent regions. However, Willis (1993, p. 64) explains that perceiving landscape as local is not accurate, in that landscape exists as a 'series of signs in a complex tapestry of cultural constructions of place, where images emerge from the shifting sands of cultural reference extending beyond the shores of this continent'. Attempts at representing any local site inevitably intersect with national and global factors affecting social, political and cultural meanings of places and their subsequent representations. Cataract Gorge is a site which represents many broader issues of human interaction with place. It has markers of its history of colonization and development of utilitarian functions such as water usage, including hydroelectricity generation. There are histories of collaboration by diverse community groups in the establishment and development of Cataract Gorge as a recreational reserve, with a range of activities occurring on site. Ecological issues are frequently raised. People describe a range of relationships, experiences and connections to this place and ways of interacting with topographical features. As a climber, the climbs offered by its magnificent cliffs provide both a backdrop and impetus to my project.

Early descriptions of Cataract Gorge by white settlers are steeped in the language of 18th century European aesthetic concepts involving ideas of beauty, the picturesque and the sublime, discourses with continued relevance. At the first European sighting in 1804, Colonel William Patterson noted that: 'the entrance to the first fall is picturesque beyond description with the narrow entrance up to the cataract having a very grand appearance'. Other early colonists' descriptions include 'grim silent hills', 'romantic solitude', and 'sublime grandeur' (Deeth 1991, p. 20). The language of these descriptions remains evocative to a contemporary audience.

Caroline Jordan, in *Picturesque pursuits* (2005, p. 44), observes that early colonists favoured pictorial representations of the landscape that complied with picturesque principles and importantly, that the picturesque is as much a practised way of seeing as it is a style or genre. The picturesque conventions are evident in historical photography, prints and paintings of Cataract Gorge such as Eugene Von Guerard's *Cataracts near Launceston* (1867) (Figure 1) and colonial paintings included in the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery exhibition *Reflections on Cataract Gorge* (shown October 2007 to April 2008). The picturesque way of seeing has remained a dominant form of landscape vision in settler societies since the 18th century and continues to have currency in many contemporary paintings of place, including works in *Moods of Cataract Gorge* (exhibited at Eskleigh

Home, Perth, 2007). It is evident in contemporary postcard representations and tourist promotional material, in the ways that tourists compose photographs and in the positioning of lookouts. Similar picturesque conventions operate in Tasmanian wilderness photography (Timms 2003-4).



Figure 1: Eugene Von Guerard, *Cataracts near Launceston*, 1867, lithograph, 32 x 48 cm

Von Guerard's lithograph *Cataracts near Launceston* (1867) (Figure 1) is an example of representation complying with European picturesque landscape traditions, including the use of horizontal or panoramic formats, perspectival spaces with foreground, midground and far distance, and horizon line and framing devices or motifs. The artist/viewer is positioned as surveying or looking over the scene. Such pictorial strategies do not convey the close-up, intimate and embodied experiences of the climber.

In exploring an alternative view from the picturesque, I position the viewer within the landscape as participant, interacting with rather than looking over. In initial ink paintings on paper such as *Cataract Gorge Triptych: Uphill Buttress: Cowardice, Gabriel Buttress and Lingam, Feltham Buttress* (Figure 2), contrasting pictorial strategies are used. These include vertical formats, no horizon line and vertical versions of foreground, mid-ground and distance. Ink on paper is used which is more aligned with the exploratory, preparatory and direct processes of making than a grand statement of view in oils and canvas. The viewer is positioned close up, looking up, down or through with multiple viewpoints across a series. This attempts to explore the difference between being on top of a cliff or vantage point surveying the 'view' versus how a climber sees during an ascent.



Figure 2: Sue Henderson, *Cataract Gorge Triptych: Uphill Buttress; Cowardice, Gabriel Buttress and Lingam, Feltham Buttress* 2008, ink on paper, 119 x 40, 119 x 34, 119 x 40 cm

Searching out remote and pictorially uncharted regions, and reconfiguring the familiar regarding its mode of treatment are the two strategies suggested by Malcolm Andrews (1999, p. 129) to challenge picturesque traditions of landscape representation. My project utilizes both of these strategies. Specific sites depicted in my ink paintings are difficult to access, often requiring abseiling to inaccessible places. I reconfigure the familiar strategies used in traditional picturesque principles by using contrasting pictorial devices with a focus on verticality and repositioning of the viewer, and in the materials and processes used. Visual investigations with cut-out elements of paintings pasted directly on the walls further extend formats and methods of framing views beyond traditional conventions and broaden spatial possibilities within pictorial space.

My project takes up Tim Cresswell's (2003, p. 280) challenge to contemporary researchers of place to produce geographies that are lived, embodied and practised; never finished or complete and not easily framed or read. My approach to place-making occurs through the embodied and performative activities of climbing and painting. I have intimate physical knowledge of my locality from ongoing vertical interactions through climbing conducted over many years. Studio based working methodologies rehearse and re-enact dynamics occurring onsite, reflecting physical experiences between a climber and a specific place. Exhibition settings are reflective of corporeal experiences

with open interpretations and entry points. The emergent and intertextual relationships between my climbing and painting practices allow ongoing extensions and variations of visual outcomes.

I consider how the performative actions of climbing and painting might enact, construct and alter meanings in a site and subsequent representations in the studio in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 contextualizes representations of human/nature relationships involving the activity of climbing, heights or high places, including ideas and histories of the vertical sublime and the vertical imagination which inform visual investigations. Chapter 3 introduces the initial phase of practice-led research, the exploration of viewpoint and vertical format. In Chapter 4 this is extended beyond the singular view where works are developed in series. A re-viewing of paintings through photography in Chapter 5 leads to a focus on the performance of materials and the spaces between in paintings in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 examines the boundaries between the paper edge and wall, extending elements beyond the confines of the traditional frame. This marks another shift in practice-based research from how a place is seen to how a place is experienced by a climber, extending specific views to a more open speculative approach to the relationship between action and perception.

Through my paintings, I offer viewers a unique experience of the representation of a place suggestive of the physical engagement and interactions of a climber. A climber experiences a repositioning of viewpoint and perception when entering the vertical realm, likewise alternative ways of seeing and experiencing a place are suggested to a viewer through my representations examining verticality. Viewers are invited on a perceptual and imaginative journey in the gallery setting with the possibility of examining of how climber's see, experience and interact with vertical places.

CHAPTER 1

Vertical place-making: The performative actions of climbing and painting

Practice-led research can be seen as performative, as it operates within known codes and reiterative methodologies to produce research outcomes (visual and written) as an effect of the enactment of research. Individual researchers improvise within and across discipline areas operating as active agents interacting with theoretical knowledge and distinctive aspects of various visual arts practices. From this unique mix of individual research, field of knowledge (theoretical and discipline based) and emergent studio practices, new ways of knowing and experiencing the world are constituted. Judith Butler defines performativity as 'the re-iterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effect it names' (Butler 1999, p. 236). Barbara Bolt (2004, p 152) notes similarities between Butler's definition and the way art becomes materialized, observing that 'art practice is performative in that it enacts or produces art as an effect'.

Gail Davies and Claire Dwyer (2007, p. 258) describe all research as performative – that our methods help enact the real in different situations. They argue for research methodologies in the social sciences which, rather than pursuing certainty, recognize the complexity of the world and thus use methodologies characterized by openness, reflexivity and recursivity as much as categorization, conclusion and closure. These features are evident in the generative capacity of creative arts research with its subjective, emergent and interdisciplinary approaches (Barrett & Bolt 2007, p. 3).

In the development of this project links can be found to researchers in cultural geography, aesthetics, visual arts and outdoor education. Unique interactions and connections across this field of ideas are based around the experience and meanings of climbing and painting based visual representations in a specific site. This inevitable intertextuality parallels constitutive relationships between the researcher and research processes, the climber's body and the cliff, the painter's body and painting processes.

Bronislaw Szerszynski, Wallace Hiem and Claire Waterton (2003, p. 4) describe how many contemporary authors in the social sciences treat performance 'as a means by which we come to know and as something which necessitates a different way of thinking about knowledge – not as static and passive, but as active, relational and forming distinctive events and experiences by which it is possible to know more'. Climbing, painting, practice-led and text-based research are exploratory

and active processes involving distinct, experiential events. By investigation of relational links, I hope to provide an original contribution through the exploration of how experiences of climbing can contribute to the construction of paintings of a place. Szerszynski et al. (2003, p. 3) define performance as something done or an activity that typically involves repetition of gestures, tasks and actions; for example the following of scripts and the acting out of codes, with variation and difference emerging in the application of codes to contexts. The related term 'performativity' highlights that 'certain phenomena exist only in the doing of them and that they have to be continually performed to exist at all'.

Performance is the manifestation of agency and action through which agency and creativity emerge. Performance is thus ephemeral, unpredictable, improvisatory and always contingent on its context (Szerszynski, Hiem & Waterton 2003, p. 3).

Improvisation, ephemerality and contingency are applicable terms for both climbing and painting. Each climb can be seen as a unique and unrepeatable event in time where a climber's performance is contingent on many internal factors, both physiological and psychological. Physical responses are reliant on the context of the rock features present, just as the painter's responses are dependent on the materials and conditions of making. A climber's individual style, variations and creative approaches to a climbing route marks an improvisation on the first ascension and other subsequent attempts. Similarly a painter painting a place offers a variation on what has gone before, enacting or reacting to cultural codes of representation, with individual interpretation and style. The fluid nature of physical movement means that no climb or painting can be repeated exactly as previously performed, even though the same parameters may exist. A painting has improvised qualities as the artefact of an unrepeatable interaction between the painter and materials, occurring in time, contingent on conditions, choices and the physical responses of the artist. The interpretation of a painting by a viewer will be contingent on the context of its reception, including cultural codes and traditions of representation in operation and the site in which it is displayed. In conveying the improvisatory and ephemeral nature of vertical encounters with a place I aim to extend this to the viewer's experience where works are placed to choreograph the viewer's gaze and movement around the space in many possible sequences.

The event of the climb begins with 'Climbing', the call given by a climber to alert the belayer (the person controlling the safety rope) to his or her movement in a cliff environment. This call is similar to Roland Barthes's (1977, p. 146) initial description of the term 'performative', since expanded on

by a range of theorists. The performative is defined as a rare verb form in which the enunciation has no other content (or proposition) than the act by which it is uttered, for example 'I declare'. This is an example of language 'doing something', that is it doesn't just represent but brings about effects. In his essay 'The death of the author', Barthes (1977, p. 145) uses the term performative to describe the temporal relationship between the modern (dead) author and the text: 'There is no other time than that of the enunciation and every text is written here and now'. He describes how each text has a performative function, rather than a representational or notational function (1977, p. 145). The climber's enunciation of 'Climbing' is naming the act that exists only in the moment of doing, as an action in the eternal here and now. This marks an activation of vertical space, where the cliff becomes momentarily transformed into a vertical path. Here language exceeds representation of the activity to bring about the effect, including what is being named – the act of climbing, and subsequent alterations to space and place.

The activity of climbing has other performative aspects. Judith Butler's classic application of the term performativity addresses the ways in which gender is materialized through performance (Szerszynski et al. 2003, p. 3). Butler's ideas can be applied to the enactment of climbing identities which can be seen as ritualistic, repetitive and citational practices: sequences of safety calls, checking and setting up of equipment and the climbing and re-climbing of specific routes, a re-enactment of the first ascension. Climber's enact climbing identities by using specific codes of communication and conduct. Sub-cultural language, such as vocabulary about techniques of vertical movement, naming of rock features and colloquial expressions conveying status and values, may be paired with on-the-ground re-enactments involving miming of moves. Climber's act in accordance to ethical codes of conduct, methods of climbing acceptable in different locations and codes of style or 'good form'. The activity of climbing, like other performative activities including Butler's performance of gender, exists in the doing, with the enactment of climbing identities continuing beyond the cliffs as stories are retold, gear sorted and adventures planned. This enactment of climbing identities is an example of the coded and socially constructed ways that humans interact with places (and with art).

Elizabeth Grosz (1995, p. 92), in 'Space, time and bodies', notes that the subject's relation to space and time is not passive: space is not simply an empty receptacle, independent of content: rather, the ways in which space is perceived and represented depends on the kinds of objects positioned within it and the kinds of relations the subject has to those objects. The space of Cataract Gorge has a

range of topographical features (cliffs, rocks, running water) and human made structures on the site. Interactions change over time, for example the water in the First Basin was used for laundry, drinking water, brewery water and hydropower to Ritchies flour mill in the early colony whereas now it is used for recreation and environmental maintenance (Richards & Johnson 2007). The nature of human relationships with Cataract Gorge prior to colonization is speculative, with Aboriginal community members proposing it as a historical site of spiritual significance (Richards & Johnson 2007). In the time of the early colony aesthetic responses to cliffs were recorded (Deeth 1991) (Richards & Johnson 2007), however cliffs would have been seen as an obstacle to utilitarian concerns and recreational access, rather than a place of physical and psychological challenge with imaginative dimensions for climber's. Changing interactions have created changes in the subjective experience of this place, reflecting Grosz's observation of the importance of affective relationships in addition to how places are performed on or used:

Space makes possible different kinds of relations but in turn is transformed according to the subject's affective and instrumental relations with them ... Space does not become comprehensible by the subject by being the space of movement, rather it becomes space through movement and as such acquires specific properties from the subjects constitutive functioning in it (Grosz 1995, p. 92).

Vertical space in Cataract Gorge is created, therefore by the physical movement of the subject (the climber climbing or moving about on cliffs) and also by affective relationships to the cliffs (evident through the language used in naming and mapping, texts in climbing guides, sub-cultural exchanges including oral mythology and through online social networking). In this process, according to Grosz, the climber's body, actions and affective relations are 'constitutive' – forming part of, establishing and giving existence to. This way of understanding vertical space requires continued functioning of the subject within it; hence the climber enacts vertical space through the performative actions of reiteration and repetition. My position as the subject directly comprehending a space through movement and enactment of vertical place through climbing offers unique knowledge to communicate through painting. Representation of these experiences through painting is another transformative process with its own affective and instrumental aspects.

In questioning, 'why represent places?' Edward Casey (2002, p. xv) argues that continual and diversified representing is an ingredient in the experience of landscape itself, stating: 'representation is not a contingent matter or something secondary; it is integral to the perception of the landscape itself – indeed part of its being and essential to its manifestation'. The performing of varied representations of landscape therefore creates the experience of landscape that has to be continually performed to exist. This corresponds with Butler's definition of performativity as a

reiterative and citational practice, where the landscape is represented continually and within known codes. Diversified approaches allow space for improvisation, individual styles and contextual variations. My individual contribution is the generation of new ways of conveying vertical encounters in the context of a specific place using the special knowledge I bring to the acts of making, imagining and communicating the experience of the climber.

We cannot imagine how a mind could paint. It is by lending his (or her) body to the world that the artist changes the world into paintings. To understand these transubstantiations we must go back to the working, actual body, not the body as a chunk of space or bundle of functions but that body which is an intertwining of vision and movement (Merleau-Ponty, Johnson & Smith 1993, p. 123).

The corporeal process of painting can be analysed as a performative practice existing through action, movement and in time to enact the activity the painting is representing, in this case, climbing and physical interactions in a place. The body as an intertwining of vision and movement observes, reacts and responds to elements of a developing painting with similar mechanisms operating in climbing. Steps are sequential with tacit knowledge and planning involved; one mark leads to another, one hold to the next. Vision and movement interact on rock and paper surfaces to create responses to new circumstances; to review and alter direction; correct errors and make movements into unknown territory. Both painting and climbing are temporal events created by the movement of the body in space, through rhythmic gestures, proceeding as bursts of activity and pauses in action. The climber leaves discernable traces of their physical presence on the cliff – a scuff mark, a smear of chalk. The painter's presence is left in the marks that compose the work which also define the passages of time in the making process.

Large scale paintings on paper have allowed a full body engagement with making processes, enacting aspects of my physical interactions with the site. Deb Malor describes this in the *Hills' Edge* catalogue essay:

In the act of painting the vertical view, Henderson's body is involved with this rifted earth, leaning out from the rock face emerging from the fluidity of the paint running free yet controlled; compressed, leaning into the paper (horizontal, on a floor) then stretched full length along the image...The swish of ink marks the ephemeral moment when the body is suspended between the mark and its making, between ascent and fall (Malor 2008).

My paste-up work marks a return of my body as the artist to a vertical orientation. Sequential movement up and down the walls of the gallery while placing components of cut-out paintings, one leading to the next, with a search for the next placement emulates route finding on a cliff.

When the idea of performance is extended beyond the human to encompass the non-human, meanings of nature, performance and creative practice expand. The way we think of human activities such as climbing and painting can appear like mutual improvisations with constitutive agency of non-humans – the cliffs and the paint. Szerszynski et al.'s (2003, p. 4) description applies to place making through climbing and painting:

out of this mutual improvisation one loses a sense of nature as pre-figured or merely 'played out'; instead the performance of nature appears as a process open to improvisation, creativity and emergence, embracing the human and the non-human.

The tracks eroded by foot traffic weaving around the cliffs and hillsides at Cataract Gorge are evidence of human corporeal engagement that is transformative of the site. These paths can be seen as emerging from the materiality (cliffs, rocks, steep hillside gradients, she-oaks) and embodied engagement of humans where the non-human elements have an agential role – directing and combining with human interaction to form paths. The cliffs themselves show evidence of human physical engagement, with bolts placed for abseiling and protection of climber's, chalk marks from climber's hands, graffiti, and in some locations initials of route names inscribed. Some holds or ledges are worn smooth from repeated boot scuffing, with less lichen growth and loose dirt on frequently climbed routes.

Matthew Watson (2003) observes similar human interactions with Agglestone rock, an eight metre high rock on a knoll in Dorset, United Kingdom. He describes the rock as 'drawing a place around it':

The place that the rock gathers around itself exists neither in the materiality nor as pure cultural construct. It exists in the relationship between the human and non-human in local context. The non-human shares in the relational agency in which the place is made (Watson 2003, p. 148).

Like Agglestone rock, the cliffs at Cataract Gorge can be said to draw paths around them. This relational agency can be extended to the physical interactions between a climber and the materiality of the cliff. Holds, cracks and edges combine with the corporeal engagement of a climber and from that interaction 'the climb' emerges. The cliff draws the climber through space. I have experienced such a feeling when responding to sequences of holds presented, that the cliff is directing my body to form a series of movements, thus defining a particular approach. A 'good' climbing route seems to create a fluidity of movements, perceived as climbing 'with' rather than 'on'. This co-relational agency in the creation of the climb is incongruent with the idea of 'conquering' a climb – a concept outside of my subjective experience. However, it can also be argued that climbing enacts processes and histories of colonisation of a site, with discovery and exploration of unknown places; claiming

and naming them in the language and myths of the colonizing culture and subsequent mapping and documenting in climbing guides.

Recognition of the relational agency of non-humans in the performance of place offers an alternative understanding of place. This extends post-structuralist accounts where materiality of places is seen as a passive stage for the projection of cultural meanings or constructions, part of the Cartesian conceptual division between nature and society (Watson 2003, p. 147). Instead place can be understood as 'an emergent effect of practices that bring a diversity of relationships into the moment of interaction between a person and the materiality of a site' (Watson 2003, p. 157). This includes the interactions between humans and the material and semiotic aspects of land and representation of these interactions through the practice of painting.

A parallel emergent effect in the creation of art can be seen in the processes between a person (the painter enacting performative actions of painting and climbing), the material aspects of painting (ink, paper, water) and the semiotic aspects of painting (meanings, metaphors, codes of representation). Barbara Bolt (2007) observes that focus on the agency of matter extends on the instrumentalist understanding of art tools and materials. She notes that in the artistic process objects have agency and it is through establishing conjunctions with other contributing elements in art that humans are co-responsible for letting art emerge. Bolt (2007, p. 3) describes how

Art emerges from the relations between the individual body, the social body and the material conditions of making where actors can include paint, the type of support, the weather, wind and gravity as well as discursive knowledges.

Bolt (2004, p. 1) developed her theories of performativity from watching interactions occur in her process of painting. As she describes:

the painting takes on a life of its own. It breathes, vibrates, pulsates, shimmers and generally runs away from me. The painting no longer represents or illustrates [her topic]. Instead it performs. In the performativity of imaging, life gets into the image.

This description is reminiscent of my desire in the studio to capture moments of swirling, moving, changing ink dilutions. These kinetic properties reflect the temporal, ephemeral and fluid nature of climbing. Watching inks change and develop on a page seems more exciting and reflective of interactions with a place than the resulting artefact, a shadow of the processes in action, like a verbal account of a climb. Inks pool and shift around granules of rock salt, like the river in Cataract Gorge creating patterns of flow around rocks, water still and dark in deeper areas. Returning to the studio after overnight drying reveals a slower process operating, the patterns and residue of osmosis

emulates weathering by water on cliff surfaces. Effects of gravity, a powerful force acting on the climber's body and on the geology of Cataract Gorge, are recorded as traces in the directional qualities of marks.

Bolt (2004, p. 150) describes such enactments of place by materials as the outside world entering the work; the image becomes in some way the thing that it (the image) is about – it enacts its object. This mutual reflection between imaging and reality is what Bolt argues gives the performative image power beyond representation. In my project, *Constructing vertical visions: Cataract Gorge – a visual exploration of space, place and perception* the performative function of the image contributes through the enactment of climbing movements while painting and in the performative actions of materials enacting dynamics operating in the site. These actions are overlaid on pictures bearing resemblance to elements in the site and their spatial relationships. The hung work or paintings pasted to the wall enacts the relationship of the climber to the wall in its proximity to surface and vertical orientation.

Both the performative and semiotic functions of images are relevant to my research. Pictorial strategies of representation and relevant histories including the sublime and the vertical imagination also contribute, as discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 2

Re-presenting vertical encounters in place through painting

The vertical encounters with Cataract Gorge experienced through climbing and explored in my paintings occur in a 'natural' environment. Emphasis is on interacting with the materiality of the site and in paintings, with an awareness of natural processes in action and cultural meanings and associations informing the experience.

My interactions with the materiality of a particular place are represented in paintings referencing the matter encountered through climbing in Cataract Gorge, including rock, biota and atmosphere. Familiar cracks between dolerite rock formations, edges, holds and modulations of rock surfaces revealed through my experiences of repeated climbs are recognizable pictorial elements. Biota such as lichen colonies are inferred by mark-making in paint suggestive of organic structures or plants. The element of air and its spatial relationships to cliffs is addressed by use of the blank paper or wall as an intentional and activated compositional element in my paste-up paintings.

Natural processes are creative constituents in my painting methods where gravity, drying and osmosis are used to convey the materiality of the site. These techniques emulate processes active on site (see Chapter 6). A focus on performative actions throughout the project acknowledges the importance of process and embodiment in environmental knowledge and practices. Natural processes are depicted in paintings where weathered rock surfaces and formations pictured can be seen as artefacts of geological and meteorological forces. The idea of nature as performance was first asserted by Darwin's view that the nature that we see (nature as materiality) is the ongoing product of a performance (by nature the process) (Szerszynski et al. 2003, p. 3). As a climber, I have awareness of the formation and alteration of Cataract Gorge evidenced in rock formations (materiality) by traces of the crystalline formation and effects of weathering, erosion, and movement of earth (process). The Cataract Gorge rocks and cliff faces continue to alter throughout time in response to human and non-human forces. Szerszynski et al. (2003, p. 3) extend Darwin's biological perspectives to define nature as 'biotic and a-biotic life intertwined as a co-performance of a number of different, interacting and evolving species and processes including human beings'.

Cataract Gorge is a site where natural processes and a range of human interventions, structures and histories simultaneously interact. Nature (and natural places) can be defined as a *signifier*, a world of meanings or associations (Szerszynski, Hiem & Waterton 2003, p. 3). Erica Carter, James Donald and

Judith Squires (1993, p. xii) describe how space becomes place – ‘by being named, and by embodying the symbolic and imaginary investments of a population. Place is space to which meaning has been inscribed’.

What kinds of meanings do climber’s give to cliffs? This will be apparent in the lexicon of route names or terms used to describe particular places, giving insight into symbolic and imaginary meanings and ways of seeing and constructing the landscape (Arthur 2002, p. 190). Meanings from climbing route names in Cataract Gorge relate to perceptions of nature as a playground, cathedral, or an object of dread, also documented in outdoor education research (Martin 2005) and in cultural geography (Szerszynski et al. 2003, p. 3). These are cultural constructions reflecting societal and historical ways of looking at nature, laid over the materiality of site. Verticality and high places have histories of meaning and visual representation associated with concepts of the sublime and metaphorical and imaginative references to ascension and falling:

The commonest race memory we have is the dream of falling through space. It would seem then that a psychology of verticality should devote a long study to the feelings and metaphors of the fall. Still I am going to write a short chapter on it simply to show more precisely what I believe to be the truly positive experience of verticality, which is in my opinion the dynamized verticality of heights (Bachelard 1943, p. 92).

‘Don’t fall’ (words often shouted at climber’s from Cataract Gorge main walk)

Physiological response to fear of falling and psychological strategies for fear management are present in climbing, with varied levels of actual or imagined danger existing in every move and monitored in a climber’s conscious awareness. Technology and planning aim to reduce injury associated with falling; however risks are inherent and as in many adventure sports, fear and adrenaline are part of the intensity of the experience and engagement with place.

In *Air and dreams: an essay on the imagination of movement*, Bachelard (1943, p. 90) describes the fear of falling as a primitive fear, leading to metaphors producing a psychic impression that leaves indelible traces in our unconscious. The shout of ‘Don’t fall’ from onlookers on the main walk below climbing cliffs is commonly heard when climbing at Cataract Gorge. Perhaps this marks an activation of the spectator’s fear of falling (or desire for the spectacle of the fall), identification with the imagined position of the climber or valorisation of the climber. The response of climber’s to ‘Don’t fall’ is predominately a lack of acknowledgement, suggesting that many climber’s prefer to focus on

Bachelard's 'truly positive experience of verticality, the dynamized verticality of heights' rather than reminders of the possibility of falling.

In fact despite the frequency of our impressions of falling and the reality that these have for us, I believe the true axis of the vertical imagination is directed upward. To put it another way we imagine the upward élan, and we know the downward plunge (Bachelard 1943, p. 92).

(Nearly) knowing the downward plunge has been a significant moment for some 19th century Romantic writers, leading to developments in literature and visual representations exploring the concept of the sublime. Samuel Taylor Colridge, poet of the Romantic Movement in England, described his experience of nearly falling off a mountain as one of prophecy, trance, delight, shame, pain, dreaming, madness and laughter (MacFarlane cited in Dillon 2007). Environmentalist John Muir recounts his near downward plunge in 'A near view of the High Sierra (c. 1872)'. Here he has left some artists in the mountains, while he climbs Mt Ritter, Yosemite:

After gaining a point about half way to the top, I was suddenly brought to a dead stop, with arms outspread, clinging close to the face of the rock, unable to move hand or foot either up or down. My doom appeared fixed. I must fall... I suddenly became possessed of a new sense, the other self, bygone experiences, instinct or Guardian angel came forward and assumed control. Then my trembling muscles became firm again; every rift and flaw in the rock was seen as through a microscope... (Muir 1872, cited in Boltzer and Armstrong 1998, p. 101).

Muir describes transcendental, perhaps religious experience as well as a specific way of seeing when in an extreme climbing situation – a microscopic view of rock surface. I have noticed such shifts in visual experience and intense focus on rock features when climbing, represented in attention to detail and surface in my paintings (see Chapter 6) and explored through photography (see Chapter 5).

Muir is a little disparaging of the artists in his story, describing his way of experiencing a place through the embodied experience of climbing as more connected to natural processes, such as death and glaciations, and is more comfortable in the mountain environment than his companion artists. He describes the artists' 'curious troubles' of finding sites for paintings (fitting their aesthetic model of the picturesque):

All this huge and sublime, but we see nothing yet at all available for effective pictures. Art is long and art is limited you know: and here are foregrounds, middle grounds, backgrounds, all alike (Muir 1872, cited in Boltzer and Armstrong 1998, p. 101).

While Muir and the artists may be subject to what Dillon (2007) describes as an aesthetic hierarchy of mountains in the 18th century, with the grotesque, picturesque and beautiful making up the lower slopes and the sublime at its summit, both note the limitations of the picturesque model to reflect experiences in high places.

Fear of falling; embodied experiences of height, depth and the effects of gravity; feelings of awe and the recognition of the immensity of nature contrasting with the impermanence of my existence have been relevant personal experiences in the vertical realm. Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe (1999, p.1) argues for the relevancy of 'the sublime' to contemporary aesthetics, suggesting that although the sublime is an 18th century concept and gravity is a 17th century concept, both remain relevant.

Historically, awe in the face of nature was discussed in terms of the aesthetic concept of the sublime by 18th century writers Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant. Burke identifies height and depth as the two dimensions most powerfully linked to sublimity (cited in Casey 2002, p. 40). Instead of taking such heights and depths as the literal bearers of the sublime (as they were to Burke), Kant sees them as merely supportive: 'the natural object lends itself to the presentation of a sublimity discoverable in the mind. The sublime is in us, not in things' (cited in Casey 2002, p. 49). The sublime, according to Kant, is a psychological state (in McLean 2002). Kant concedes priority to natural place as a site of the sublime in that it occasions or inspires ideas of the sublime. Thus the idea of the sublime is actively bestowed on nature (Casey 2002, p. 54). In this sense, the idea of the sublime can be inspired by representations of the landscape. This requires knowledge of this tradition or active identification with implied psychological states by a viewer. This could be further reinforced by use of motifs known in traditional depictions of the sublime including precipices, cliffs, and the abyss as depicted in my project.

Prior to considering such theories I believed that perceptions of awe, greatness and transcendence were something that nature did to me. Since reading Kant's theories and literature about the cultural construction of nature/wilderness, I have realized my own role in the creation of such experiences, assisted by cultural and social mythologies carried about climbing or being in precarious places (for example as a heroic feat or pilgrimage). However, these perceptions are not generated entirely in my mind; rather in combination with experiences of places. I agree with Casey's (2002, p. 54) suggestions that:

true sublimity exists neither in the mind taken by itself alone (as Kant holds) nor in the empirical world at large (as Burke presumes). It exists in their commixture, which is located and manifested in places of landscape in whose circumambience mind and nature meet.

This would suggest that in representation, sublimity exists between the painting which evokes a history of ideas, and the activation of the viewer's mind and imagination.

Inspiring terror/fear while the observer is not in mortal danger is a further aspect of the sublime (Andrews 1999, p. 135). It is possible that while in enhanced physiological states of fear, as when climbing or in precarious positions, feelings of awe, 'delightful terror' or sensations of human powerlessness are more likely to occur. Does it follow that implying such positions in representation is likely to provoke such responses in a viewer?

Casey (2002, p. 54) describes two limitations to participation by the viewer in landscape paintings. Firstly the viewer is required to assume the position in the painting dictated by the painter in advance. This is illustrated in my initial works (see Chapter 3) where a viewer is led through a series of specific points of view depicting sites in Cataract Gorge. In later installation work (such as *Rising damp* installed at Cataract Gorge Basin Café (see Chapter 7)) a viewer has more options as to how they position themselves in relation to the work or sequence images. Casey's (2002, p. 54) second limitation is that participation requires an act of empathetic mentation, to sense oneself to be in the scene, to occupy our place in it by taking up the artist's point of view through an open state of mind.

To suggest the fear of falling, feelings of awe in nature or 'delightful terror' through the medium of paintings poses a challenge, when a viewer has two feet on the ground in a safe gallery space. Paul Crowther (2009, p. 21) discusses the role of imagination in perception as allowing a projection of states (for example the sublime) or items (such as the precipice) which are not present in the perceptual field, that is, through imagination we can project the possibility of persons (the viewer) occupying places other than where they are currently situated (feet flat on the gallery floor). He describes how imagination is deeply involved in associational meaning, where imagery arising from cultural or personal connotations of an item or state of affairs influences how it is perceived (2009, p. 21). This would include recognition of culturally learned texts and symbols relating to the sublime, a phenomena remaining in operation in contemporary life. Painting has histories of conveying subjective experience, allows suspension of reality and can present spatial relationships not physically accessible.

The artist Thomas Cooper employs fear as part of the creative process, describing the positive effects of fear as: 'it intensifies perceptual acuity, increases visceral sensitivities and generates ardour' (in Weintraub 2003, p. 187). Cooper often leans over cliff edges using fear and risk as part of his making process. In a similar way the fear of falling is a factor in intensifying experience in the vertical realm and quietly invades the climber's perspective which informs my paintings.



Figure 3: Thomas Cooper, *An indication piece, Cabot Strait – Looking N., N.E. – toward the New World. Cape North, Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, Canada (One of the two most northernmost points of Nova Scotia – and along the site of John Cabot's discoveries and explorations of the New World for the English)*, 1999-2000, silver gelatin print

In *Indication pieces*, a series from 1995 to date, Cooper pays tribute to individuals who have journeyed to the edge of possibility, exploring, inhabiting or occupying the unknown (Weintraub 2003). His working process involves locating geographically the precise spot where a transformative moment occurred in history. Re-enacting the adversity of historical explorers, Cooper uses an 1898 field camera with one lens to take a single shot only on the actual site of cultural, historical or geographical significance after several days or visits. Lengthy titles are used to identify the actual locations and historical events that occurred there. In Figure 3, Cooper positioned his camera on the last toehold of the cliff marking the outer limit of the North American continental mass on the site of John Cabot's discovery of the New World for England. Images of rock and sea become charged with the human drama of what once happened in the location through information given in the title (Weintraub 2003).

Like Cooper, I use titles of specific climbing routes to reference human activity and cultural constructions of meanings in a site. Geography is referenced through particularities of sites and made significant due to the histories of human activity and exploration through climbing with subsequent naming and mapping. A cliff becomes a different type of place once it has been climbed, with the activation of the vertical realm by the climber. Vertical environments still hold unexplored, unmapped territory, unlike most locations left in the Western world, where individual dramas of exploration, risk and extension of possibilities are played out.

Cooper's work demonstrates how images can reflect cultural constructions of nature. What appears to be about nature as materiality (images of sea, cliffs, and rocks) is really about culture (human activity/history). Cooper describes his sea and cliff scapes, photographs of the natural environment, empty of physical evidence of humans: 'my work is 99 per cent activated by human activity' (Weintraub 2003, p. 183). I use similar elements – rocks, cliffs, air, water – to also represent human activity within a site with an absence that leaves space for viewer empathy.

Dan Shippersides utilizes his own physical presence to produce 'landscape artworks' using 'climbing as a creative methodology' (Shippersides 2005). His practice encompasses a range of mediums including performance art, video (for example in *San Lorenzo direct* in 2004, he is videoed climbing on a wrecked freight ship), text (including transcribed recordings of commentary while climbing), photography, drawing and interactive sculpture in gallery and other contexts. Shippersides describes an interest in how non-art activities such as climbing may be used experientially with and without the context of art and seeks 'new ideas found when the framework is made apparent or frameworks overlapped or mutually expanded' (Shippersides 2005). Like Shippersides, the source of my project is the activity of climbing but with the specific parameters of how this can influence the construction and placement of paintings.



Figure 4: Dan Shippersides, details from *Radical architecture*, 2007, mixed media, Castlefield Gallery, Manchester.

In the gallery based project *Radical architecture* (2007), Shippersides attempts to chart social and

cultural change by constructing a climbable sculpture based on physical features of a climbing route, with photographic route drawings contextualized by artworks borrowed from local museums and text (Shipsides 2010). While this may 'chart' aspects of climbing in an area *Radical architecture* reads like a technical display in which he has combined literal or superficial elements with his sculpture undifferentiated from gym climbing walls except for its gallery location. While offering a participatory experience to the audience, this does not approximate experience in that the tactile references are limited. Tactility and surface qualities are essential for my work in conveying the intimate and direct contact with the materiality of the cliffs. My aim is not to simulate the experience but to activate a viewer's imagination and speculation.

Shipsides' *Radical architecture* (2007) and my paste-up installations such as *Rising damp* (2009-10) use the gallery as an interactive space and activates locations not commonly used in order to question the habits of viewing and traditional expectations of art experiences. Like Shipsides' body performing on his sculpture, my body enacts climbing movements when painting and installing work. However, painting has specific performative qualities: it holds the presence of the painter and the painter's gestural marks in the work, with qualities reflective of the experience. Central to my project is the contribution of art materials as responsive, dynamic element on fragile paper to embody the ephemeral, temporal and unpredictable aspects of the climb. Painting has histories of representation of place-making; links to the sublime and the vertical imagination and histories of subjective expression make it an ideal mode for my visual explorations of a climber's way of seeing and experiences in a locality.

CHAPTER 3

Visual exploration of viewpoint and vertical format

My initial paintings explored verticality through the manipulation of format, composition and negative spaces that repositioned the artist's/viewer's point of view. These visual reference points reflect a participatory relationship with a specific place, emphasizing what is seen by the climber on the way up, as opposed to the grand view from the top.

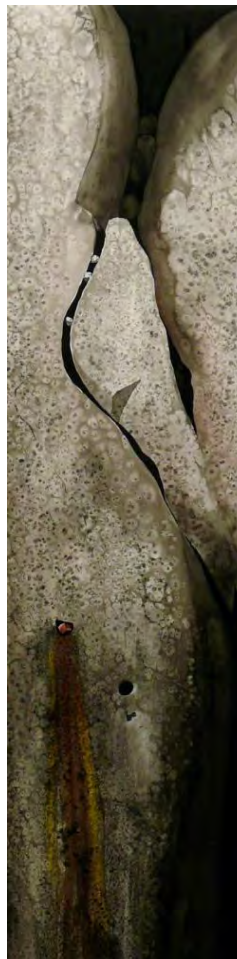


Figure 5: Sue Henderson, *Inside chimney, Uphill Buttress*, 2007, ink on paper, 198 x 47 cm

Figure 6: Sue Henderson, *Millrace remnants near Riverside Buttress*, 2007, ink on paper, 198 x 47 cm

Figure 7: Sue Henderson, *Descent route, Uphill Buttress*, 2007, ink on paper, 198 x 47 cm

The viewpoints which I explored include looking through to a cliff face which disappears into light in *Inside chimney, Uphill Buttress* (Figure 5); a close up position in *Millrace remnants near Riverside Buttress* (Figure 6) (which includes traces of human impact on the site, rusting spikes left from the millrace used to transport water to Ritchies Mill) and looking up to a precariously balanced rock in *Descent route, Uphill Buttress* (Figure 7).

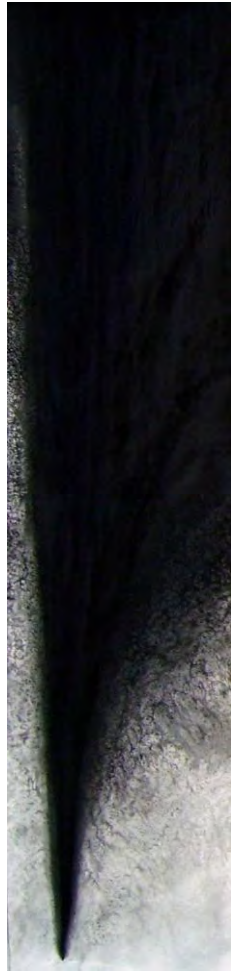


Figure 8: Sue Henderson, *Escape route, Saturday Night Buttress*, 2007, ink on paper, 198 x 47 cm

Figure 9: Sue Henderson, *Falling out of the abyss* 2007, ink on paper, 198 x 47 cm

Figure 10: Sue Henderson, *Step down, Descent route, shady side*, 2007, ink on paper, 198 x 47 cm

In *Escape route, Saturday Night Buttress* (Figure 8) a rock is wedged between two cliff surfaces with space suggested beyond. *Falling out of the abyss* (Figure 9) implies psychological states and provides a disorientating view. The viewer experiences the vertiginous effect of looking down a sheer drop in *Step down, descent route, shady side* (Figure 10).

Titles in these initial paintings were predominately literal, referencing specific sites that could be located by following a climbing guide. These route names demonstrate some of the meanings that humans have overlaid onto these locations including mythic, literary, imaginative, or irreverent names reflecting aspects of climbing sub-culture. In addition to revealing specific cultural constructions active on the site, titling was a strategy to invite imaginative response or questioning from the viewer, providing cues to consider potential metaphoric content in the paintings.

Climbing involves direct physical interactions with a place. These events are not filtered through layers of technology that might buffer an experience. Small edges, modulations in texture and surface, cracks and edges become important focal points to a climber through visual, sensory and kinaesthetic perceptual systems. The effects of gravity on a climber are direct and obvious. Mental and physical focus is in the moment and often intense. Dolerite is hard on fingertips and exposed skin. The creation of surfaces that enhance tactile relationships between the work and a viewer reinforces the corporeal and sensory nature of the interactions with place that I want to communicate. My choices of materials reflect direct ways of making or working with images through simple painting processes using ink on paper. Visually engaging and layered surfaces of ink signify textured dolerite cliffs, cracks and rock structures, patterns of lichen, staining and natural weathering processes in action. Colour is applied in delicate layered washes with subtle contrasts and saturations to reflect perceptual experiences of a climber where cliff surfaces fill the visual field with close-up views of subtle tonal, colour and textural variations. Subtle dilutions of colour and tone imply distance, changes in geology or describe damp or warmer microclimates. Painting processes and developments in the performance of materials are further discussed in Chapter 6.

The materials of ink and paper have intrinsic meanings linked with traditions such as mapping, Eastern/Chinese landscape traditions and the preparatory and exploratory traditions of drawing. These traditions offer alternatives to the singular grand statement of 'view' in oil on canvas used in picturesque landscape traditions. Paper as a support is consistent with an open-ended, more temporary or speculative approach.

Compositions were designed around the vertical format to reflect a climber's vision with its emphasis on verticality. Vertical formats are consistent with a vertical passage through an environment, the upward (or downward) focus of a climber's way of seeing, and are reminiscent of the structures of dolerite columns in Cataract Gorge. Space was made to recede or come forward by using tonal and aerial perspective systems to convey and exaggerate vertical space.

When a climber as a viewing subject moves through a vertical place, the perceived relations change in accordance with physical laws: as we get higher, or look up, objects consistently change in terms of relative scale. Crowther (2009, p. 21) describes how perspective renders the systematic character of such relations in pictorial terms, that is perspective within a picture presents 'the systematic and consistent way in which the mobile and embodied subject inheres in a unified field of visual items and relations'. Crowther argues that perspective exemplifies a structure that is basic to perception.

Reliance on codes of visual representation such as perspective is inevitable when attempting to communicate a climber's way of seeing within a specific site.

Whilst relying on these traditional Western methods of pictorial construction to convey spatial relationships, these compositions attempt to reconfigure familiar compositional strategies used in picturesque styles of landscape representation. As discussed in the introduction using the example of Von Guerard's *Cataracts near Launceston* (1867) (Figure 1), this included contrasting compositional strategies based around extreme vertical formats with no horizon lines, instead of panoramas or horizontal formats with foreground, midground and background space; and positioning the viewer close up or looking up from within the vertical realm rather than surveying the scene.

Richard Etlin (1998) notes that the aesthetic response to scenes of nature and works of art involves a bodily sense of self, which has a spatial dimension. He suggests that the mechanism by which viewers become involved is through an engagement with his/her personal space. He describes how artists can draw a viewer's personal space deep into a scene or thrust the subject forward from the picture plane to engage our personal space. Engagement of a viewer's bodily sense of self and personal space has been a focus in developing my individual paintings and through the display of my paintings in series and as immersive installations. Strategies of cropping, the use of minimal framing structures and the absence of horizon lines were attempts to avoid distancing the viewer from the landscape, thus locating the viewer in close proximity to or within the landscape as a participant rather than surveying a view. Spatial engagement is amplified when paintings of contrasting viewpoints are experienced in series and by the use of scale. Formats of various scales and proportions with subsequent visual and spatial effects were considered in a variety of critiques and exhibition settings (see Appendix 1). These ranged from large (200 x 250 cm) to miniatures (6 x 8 cm), with arrangements in triptychs and diptychs explored. A frequently used format was 200 x 47 cm, with the size and shape of these paintings relating to a viewer's body, slightly longer than life-size, with orientation echoing the upright human body when moving through a place. Close cropping of sections from the landscape reduces the locative, visual cues of content of some works, allowing possible figurative or sensuous readings. Deciphering ambiguity, multiple meanings or layers within an image or making connections between paintings in series engages a viewer's perception and intellect.

Particular sites were selected in Cataract Gorge if they were well-known from repeated, embodied experiences of climbing, therefore accessing kinaesthetic knowledge to inform the making of the work. I chose sites with geological features reflective of topography specific to Cataract Gorge. Some localities had features with potential for implying metaphoric content: for example a pinnacle stretching away might suggest ascension, and a precariously balanced rock could imply fragility of life. Other sites had actual place names of interest to me.

Places depicted in paintings are often difficult to access and seldom seen, sometimes requiring abseiling or scrambling approaches. Revisiting sites throughout the project to gather and extend on visual source material developed a symbiotic relationship between climbing on sites and painting them, with each experience enriching and informing the other. In these initial vertical views, my emphasis was on the particularity and the authenticity of site, with locations depicted that would be recognizable to other climber's. This literal approach became more flexible, with a progression from the specific to more speculative and open readings, with elements evoking aspects reminiscent of the site. This marked a change in emphasis from how a locality is seen by a climber to how it is experienced through climbing.

Looking specifically at localities where I have climbed as depicted by other artists differentiates and clarifies my aims. Examples discussed are Carleton Watkins' photograph of *Cathedral Rock* in Yosemite Valley and a traditional Chinese ink landscape painting of the limestone pinnacles of Guilin, followed by a painting by Sidney Nolan which was inspired by that area.



Figure 11: Carleton Watkins, *Cathedral Rock*, 1861, mammoth plate photograph, 43.2 x 53.3 cm

Carleton Watkins was best known for his photographic views of Yosemite Valley, visited initially in 1861 then on subsequent trips as part of the Californian State Geological survey team (Casey 2002, p. 22). Climbing in the Yosemite Valley in 2000 expanded my experience of height. Judgements of distance and relative scale from climbing locations in Tasmania, including Cataract Gorge, became incomprehensible in relation to the enormous size of the granite cliffs.

Watkins' *Cathedral Rock* (1861) (Figure 11) demonstrates how photography can extend beyond topographic accuracy and strict replication, as he captures a sense of the monumentality and sheer height of this awesome location (Casey 2002, p. 22). This photograph exemplifies a particular way of dealing with height, achieved through the use of framing, viewpoint and tone, and from distortions arising in the technology. The massive size of the rock is created through selecting a low vantage point from the valley floor, with a constricted rather than panoramic viewpoint, allowing the rock formation to occupy the entire frame. I employed similar compositional devices in some paintings, including monumental page-filling compositions with low viewpoints suggesting immense space in relation to a viewer's body or the up-close position of a climber looking at a cliff looming above.

In *Cathedral Rock* lighter tones and obscured detail at the tops of the cliffs, due to overexposure on the photographic plates, a common effect in 19th century photography (Casey 2002, p. 22), increases the impression of the formation's formidable height although it is a technical rather than aesthetic imprint. In paintings, I have used similar visual effects such as lighter tones, reduced or obscured details and contrast at the tops of portrayals of Pinnacles or cliffs to exaggerate height. These variants of perspective systems are traditional pictorial devices used to convey space and illustrate a continuing relevance of certain traditional codes of representation. Whilst using some similar pictorial strategies as seen in *Cathedral Rock*, the materials and processes of painting offer exaggeration, distortion and manipulation in ways that cannot be achieved through the technology used by Watkins. Painting has multiple histories of subjective expression suited to engage individual experience and perceptions within a place. Physical gestural activity creates both painting and climbing, offering tactile qualities which imply close contact with a place rather the distancing effects of a lens.

The overexposure and distortion of the wide-angle lens could be seen as merely the technological limitations of Watkins' camera; however, these effects increased the convincing sense of height and size. Contemplation of the visual effects of different lenses and their correlation with ways of seeing,

such as the effects of Watkins technology, led me to use photography as an investigative tool to review my paintings (see Chapter 5).

The qualities in *Cathedral Rock* extend beyond topographic documentation, despite Watkins' intention to provide the city dwellers of San Francisco with a likeness of this spectacular landscape (Casey 2002, p. 22), a purpose similar to contemporary postcard representations. Chinese ink painting scrolls (for example Figure 12) made for (predominately Chinese) tourists visiting the Guilin area perform a similar social function, with a contrasting way of seeing and representing an experiential encounter of a place.



Figure 12: Artist unknown, *Guilin scroll*, purchased 2005, ink on paper, 100 x 55 cm

While predominately operating within Western pictorial methods, the use of vertical formats, some compositions and the paper and ink materials used in my project have affinities with Chinese landscape traditions. This could be seen to reference Chinese settler histories in Cataract Gorge (Deeth 1991, p. 40) and the geological structure of Cataract Gorge, which when viewed from high vantage points, can appear similar to compositions and spatial arrangements used in Eastern landscape conventions.

Chinese landscape painting represents an alternative way of seeing from European picturesque traditions. While both are specific systems of representation with explicit codes continued over time

and formalized visual languages, in Chinese painting transcendental qualities take precedence. Casey (2002, pp. 114-5) describes the painter in ancient Chinese traditions as:

wandering in the midst of natural places for years in preparation of painting so that he (or she in other traditions) may take these places in, identify with them, and then transmit them to others. The task of the painter is to transmit the spirit of place by re-implacing it into his paintings.

While not wishing to claim such intense preparation or identification with transcendental qualities in the landscape, my groundwork for this project has involved wandering in the site and years of embodied knowledge through climbing, observation and reflection. This kinaesthetic knowledge and memory informs the work in many subtle ways and is fundamental to the project.

Guilin scroll (Figure 12) portrays the topography which inspired Sidney Nolan to make paintings of the same surreal limestone mountains seen on a boat trip on the Gui River in the Guilin area (Edmund Capon, in Pearce 2007, p. 14). Twenty-six years later, I took a similar boat journey and climbed many of the sharp Pinnacles with Chinese guides, a unique cultural and physical experience. Like Nolan, I was inspired by the dramatic, natural beauty of this location and the meditative qualities of the Chinese painting tradition (Pearce 2007, p. 214).



Figure 13: Sidney Nolan, *Chinese mountain landscape with three boats*, 1982, acrylic and lacquer spray on canvas, 183 x 160 cm

Chinese mountain landscape with three boats (1982) (Figure 13) is from a series of late works in the 1980's in which Nolan's interest in Chinese culture and landscape has shifted his focus from the Australian landscape, allowing a return towards the looser forms of abstraction of his earlier career

(Pearce 2007, p. 214). This painting demonstrates the influence of Chinese culture, as Nolan generalizes codes of Chinese landscape painting and remembered mountain structures. He simplifies forms with rapid execution, leading us into the idea of mountains. In my project specificity of a site rather than the idea of cliffs or climbing is important; therefore his strategies of generalizing or simplifying codes are not as relevant as his investigation of surface. The ease of production of this painting and associated series has been critiqued as 'quintessential superficial Nolan' (Capon, in Pearce 2007, p. 14). This apparent 'lack of effort' could be seen as an authentic engagement with his subject. Nolan admired the art of brush and ink for its immediacy and directness and the Chinese saw spontaneity as a quality rich in honesty, therefore to be admired (Capon, in Pearce 2007, p. 14). While also appreciating the directness and immediacy of ink, I am more interested in Nolan's creation of surfaces than the spontaneous gesture. Studying his paintings up close reveals physical textures with an intimacy of touch, rapidly and skilfully executed. In *Chinese mountain landscape with three boats* Nolan uses spray paint to create texture and points of contrasting focus and negative space. This exploration of materials is pertinent to my use of spray packs pointed in contrasting directions to suggest the moving, scanning gaze of a climber (Figures 28, 29, and 30).

These three depictions of locations where I have climbed are important to my project: however they do not communicate the extent of my experiences as a climber in these sites. The contributing factors are the portrayal of a 'distancing' view and the limitation of the singular view. This led to exploring strategies which extended paintings beyond a singular view, including developing my work in series and enhancing participatory and corporeal relationships when presenting the work.

CHAPTER 4

Beyond the singular view: Development of artwork in series

Presenting paintings as a series of viewpoints in dynamic interplay was the next logical step in my project. The visual perception of a climber involves seeing while moving in a vertical environment interspersed with pauses in stationary positions – a series of movements and rests – to plan the next moves, arrange protection, make judgements of height and distance, or take in the scenery.

Berger (2005, p. 3) describes the static nature of paintings and drawings as their virtue and function – the static image consists of so many assembled moments that it constitutes a totality, rather than a fragment. This is how a drawing/painting encompasses time and contains the experience of looking. According to Berger (2005, p. 3), to draw is to look, examining the structure of appearances – involving, deriving from and referring back to much previous looking. My paintings of cliffs are more than cliffs being looked at, with a particular range of experiences extending beyond the visual, informing their making. Casey (2002, p. xiv) describes how landscape paintings, once seen, may call for further seeing. In my works this further seeing encompasses imagination and speculation.

The two-dimensional static nature of paintings may appear to limit the description of a climber's visual perceptions; however, the distinctive features of painting offer relevant expressive qualities. Crowther (2009, p. 78) describes how vision involves the embodied subject constantly changing position with moments of stationary orientation, where we are visually able to comprehend more than when moving and where objects are optimally seen from a frontal viewpoint. An example is the climber stopping to carefully observe rock features in front before making the next move. In painting pictorial space is constructed to be comprehended by a viewer from this stationary frontal viewpoint. This optimal viewing position is basic to vision and hard to attain in ordinary perception. In visual compositions these conditions of viewing are achieved with a completeness that transitory perception can only aspire to (Crowther 2009, p. 79). My paintings of vertical views go beyond the ordinary (highly mobile) conditions of perception and offer an enhanced visual presentation, where pictorial space is set aside from reality. A painting is perceived as a whole, not requiring comprehension of parts in a linear, temporal order (Crowther 2009, p. 79). In presenting the vertical view, my paintings offer for scrutiny the combined outcomes of the physical movements of the painter and the movement of the ink, compressed into a single dimension.

Other artists straddling the place between the static and the dynamic moving subject in the landscape include selected works by William Robinson and Tim Burns, extending landscape portrayals beyond singular views by addressing multiple viewpoints in the same painting, and therefore creating a sense of being in or moving through a place. I consider Burns' strategies for presentation in the exhibition *Water Music* (2007) in which paintings with multiple viewpoints are exhibited alongside works with reduced references to landscape. I discuss Nancy Spero's work on scroll-like formats in regard to how elements interact within and across scrolls to create multiple experiences. Bea Maddock's *Terra Spiritus* (1993-1998) provides an example where singular views join to become a continuous representation of the Tasmanian coastline. Visual issues addressed by these artists informed the development of my work in series and presentation in exhibitions discussed further in this chapter.



Figure 14: William Robinson, *Early light, Coomera Gorge*, 1994, oil on canvas, 137 x 182.5 cm

William Robinson uses unstable vantage points and multi-perspectival viewing positions in his paintings, with backgrounds and foregrounds presented concurrently as the artist/viewer inhabits the landscape. In *Early light, Coomera Gorge* (1994) (Figure 14) the horizon line is abandoned, with the viewer simultaneously seeing above, below and through. This illustrates an attempt to describe an intimate relationship with the land as a dynamic encounter in time, where awareness extends to the many elements seen from varied viewpoints. Robinson states that:

to look up and down almost at the same time, to have a feeling of time, the beginning and movement of day and night and be aware of the revolving planet may be revealed in the same work. I did not paint

these works as a visitor to the landscape, but as one who lived in it and experienced it every day (McDonald 2000, p. 212).

Robinson's paintings are drawn from the memories of lived experience in a particular and personal landscape (Fink 2001). In my project kinaesthetic memories of climbing sites visited regularly over many years inform making and enhance information from support material and visual memory. Like Robinson, lived experience and attention to detail are important aspects in my communication of the intense focus of a climber.

Described as a religious painter, some interpretations placed on Robinson's paintings include 'approximations or tributes to the sacred moment where the physical and spiritual become synonymous' (Fink 2001). Possible transcendent moments or feelings of connectedness occur between a climber and a place, which I allude to indirectly in paintings and in some titles, with links to the history of the sublime and the vertical imagination (see discussion in Chapter 2). Robinson has been compared to the romantic high Victorian painters (who also painted Cataract Gorge) Von Guerard and Piguénit, in terms of his subject matter, reference to the 'sublime' and attention to detail.

Robinson's aim of communicating a dynamic, multiperspectival experience of land is similar to my intentions. Rather than achieving this in a single image, I aim to suggest a participatory experience with a place across a series of paintings or installations.

A further example of using disparate multiple perspectives and codes is *Bruny Island to Blinking Bill* (2007) by Tim Burns (Figure 15). In this large oil painting vastly different visual reference points of the topographical features of Bruny Island shift and merge with manipulations of horizon lines. Variations in viewpoint are linked through contour lines and painted surfaces, ranging from impasto through to transparent paint, implying contrasting water qualities and their reactions to light. Codes are mixed, including close-up forms suggestive of ecology, illustrative sections describing landmasses, diagrammatic and mapping references, and the abstraction of paint surfaces evoking the changing sea.



Figure 15: Tim Burns, *Bruny Island to Blinking Bill*, 2007, oil on linen, 198 x 365 cm

Peter Timms (2005) describes the layering of paint in Burns's paintings as going further than simply calling to mind the outward appearances of natural phenomena. They say 'something profound about the relationships of one thing to another, providing a way of returning to nature even when "nature" as commonly understood, is nowhere in evidence'. Timms's description and close inspection of paint surfaces in the exhibition *Water Music* in 2007 at Launceston's Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, led me to review my use of materials, considering more contrasting applications of paint and how mark-making could contribute to my descriptions of the elements of rock, air and water. I also extend meanings further than the outward appearance of cliff structure and surface and explore interactions between places and human relationships to them. Burns states:

'Nature, abstraction and poetry drive my work. The place that I live in always seeps into my paintings: it happens in a very subliminal way. Water is and always has been a big part of my life. I find it incredibly comforting on a deep level. Water is a metaphor for many things – for life and the passing of time' (Bett 2005).

Whilst literal in my initial attempts to describe the natural elements important to me, I was also aware of how the elements of earth, rocks, cliffs and vertical places might act metaphorically, with my paintings becoming increasingly suggestive throughout the practice-led research process.

In *Water Music* works with an emphasis on paint surface and colour were hung along with paintings with direct landscape references and multiple viewpoints such as *Bruny Island to Blinking Bill*. This was an effective strategy for exhibiting a range of contrasting experiences of place and activating a viewer's perceptual and imaginative responses. Anthony Lawrence (2007), in the catalogue for the exhibition, describes Burns's paintings as 'telling stories to and about each other'. This resonates

with my aim to create a series of paintings that can be read in relation to each other and the gallery wall space, exploring ideas of materiality, light, form, and imagination.

Nancy Spero also creates imagery read in relation to elements within and across works, by combining multiple depictions of women inspired by classical and modern sources to explore contrasting discourses of the female body. While my work does not directly depict the literal body, rather a bodily presence through its traces left in the work or corporeal relationships described in the work, Spero's strategies for presenting imagery are relevant (discussed further in Chapter 7).



Figure 16: Nancy Spero, *Sky goddess/Egyptian acrobat*, 1987-88, hand printing and printed collage on paper

Spero creates images which lead a viewer through layers or sections of narratives with varied patterns and ideas. Multiple experiences are suggested and differing codes placed against each other. Spero's collages and manipulations of scroll formats have been described as 'returning images to a space of continuity where beginnings and endings are insignificant' (Brooks 2003, p.107). In works like *Sky goddess/Egyptian acrobat* (1987-88) (Figure 16) a left to right sequential reading is disrupted and images can be read in a range of combinations and sequences, with an emphasis on verticality. Like a climber sequencing moves in varied ways across the same climb, I was interested in circuitous, continuous readings with multiple entry points rather than a linear narrative.

In initial exhibitions, I utilized a strategy frequently used by Spero of presenting work on vertical scroll-like formats, with paper placed directly onto the walls. This attempted to promote continuity of surface in a gallery setting, so the walls became part of the represented landscape and the viewer's experience of place. These ideas of continuity of space and presentation of multiple

contrasts and layered representations of experiences seen in Spero's work are relevant to my attempts to communicate dynamic, sequenced experiences of a place.



Figure 17: Bea Maddock, *Terra Spiritus*, 1993-1998 (detail)

Bea Maddock's *Terra Spiritus* (1993-1998) (Figure 17) is an example of singular views joining to form a continuous representation of a place. In 51 horizontal sheets a panorama of the entire coastline of Tasmania is presented using mathematically constructed inscribed images. Places are labelled with their corresponding European and Palawa names (Maddock 1999). Tonal systems using ground ochre, material from the land and the visual culture of the Indigenous people add other layers of meaning. While not referencing Indigenous culture or using actual earth, I use processes associated with land such as gravity and the effects of water in the application of materials used to describe cliff surfaces (see Chapter 6).

Through the complete description of the edge of the island in *Terra Spiritus*, a different horizon is being described and imagined beyond (Sayers 2001). My work is contrasting in its format; as the horizon is absent; instead, the vertical edge becomes what is described and imagined beyond. Like Maddock, I attempt to set up alternative ways of seeing a place and conveying space, while inviting a viewer on a physical, perceptual and imaginative journey exploring verticality rather than a panorama. Andrew Sayers (2001) notes that 'it is impossible to experience *Terra Spiritus* except as a sequence or journey – a journey in which an immensely long history is brought in to the present through different orders of naming, seeing and knowing the land'. Maddock suggests movement through time by layering differing codes in a considered, intellectual approach, which describes visual, cultural and mathematical constructions of landscape more than physical and sensorial engagement of bodies interacting with places. The geometric and linear exhibition arrangements of *Terra Spiritus* parallel the structures imposed by history; mapping and the architecture of the cultural institutions where it is presented. In my project, a more dynamic, fluid and sensory approach is consistent with my aims.

Although less ambitious in historical scope in overtly describing processes of colonization, I acknowledge the limitations of Eurocentric codes of landscape traditions in my attempts to extend them. In my project, labelling of the land (and air, in the *Space in between* series) is explored from a sub-cultural framework, with imaginative, mythological and intrinsically colonizing impulses revealed as I explore a climber's way of seeing and embodied experiences of place.

The scale of *Terra Spiritus* and subsequent physical engagement required to view it, led me to investigate ways of enhancing participation in the physical encounter of exhibited work. At the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, in 2001, *Terra Spiritus* was hung in a panorama, wrapping around the internal three walls of the gallery. At the National Gallery of Victoria, in 2003, it was displayed around the outside walls of another internal room (North 2003). The contrasting presentations of the same work and the implied meanings – one of a horizon line wrapping around a viewer, the other requiring a circumnavigation by a viewer – expanded my possibilities for the presentation of work in my project, in works on paper and in the *Rising damp* series of installations.



Figure 18: Bea Maddock, *Terra Spiritus*, 1993-1998, Ian Potter Centre, National Gallery of Victoria, 2003, (partial installation view)

When displaying work, I aim to invite a viewer on an imaginative and perceptual journey of a place, both actual (the physical journey in a gallery) and in representation. The development and presentation of my work in a series was integral to this aim. Working in a series allowed multiple inputs of images, motifs and textures to build meaning, engage perception or evoke a memory. Manipulation of spacing between works may provide rest areas, imply continued space or have a spatial effect on the body and viewer reception. There is a build-up or layering of experiences with my paintings in a gallery setting as the viewer walks past them, between them or revisits images.

This physical journey in time is congruent with direct encounters of vertical places, often experienced through multiple visits, a significant factor in building relationships with place (Martin 2005). Presenting my work in a series within the limitations of specific exhibition spaces resulted in an exploration of diverse strategies to create immersive experiences optimising corporeal relationships between viewers and the work. Examples discussed in this chapter include exhibitions held at: S.p.a.c.e. gallery, e.Scape Wilderness Café Gallery, *Hills' Edge* at Burnie Regional Art Gallery and Cataract Gorge Basin Café (see Appendix 1 for further relevant exhibitions).



Figure 19: Sue Henderson, *Vertical views and precarious positions: Re-presenting Cataract Gorge*, 2007, S.p.a.c.e. gallery, Scotch Oakburn College, Launceston (installation view)

In the S.p.a.c.e. gallery at Scotch Oakburn College, Launceston in April 2007, nine of my works were displayed on a curved, concave wall, and arranged to display alternating contrasts in viewpoints across images, directing a viewer in and out of virtual space (Figure 19). A viewer was able to scan all works at once, similar to Bea Maddock's panoramic presentation of *Terra Spiritus* at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery. The glass panels enclosing S.p.a.c.e. presented an interesting juxtaposition of looking inside to my depictions of an outside environment, with the vertical structure of the glass panels echoing the format of paintings.



Figure 20: Sue Henderson, *Vertical views and precarious positions*, 2007, e.Scape Wilderness Café Gallery, St Mary's (installation view)

At e.Scape Wilderness Café Gallery, St Mary's in May 2007, thirteen of my paintings were exhibited in a four-walled, enclosed space. Works were positioned high, above the dado rail, thus requiring an upward gaze, similar to the experience of looking up when beneath the cliffs in Cataract Gorge (Figure 20). Being surrounded by the work on four sides gave a feeling of immersion and enclosure reminiscent of being surrounded by cliffs in the narrower, confined sections of the Gorge.



Figure 21: Sue Henderson, *Hills' Edge*, 2008, Burnie Regional Art Gallery, Burnie, (installation view)

Another format was used in *Hills' Edge* in May 2008, a two-person show with Jane Giblin in the main gallery of Burnie Regional Gallery. Twenty of my works were displayed on two perimeter walls and on floating, angled panels of similar vertical format to my paintings (Figure 21). Giblin's large-scale horizontal format paintings were on the other side of the gallery, on larger constructed panels and the remaining perimeter walls. Viewers had to weave circuitously around and among panels to see the work. In this configuration only a small amount of the work could be seen at one time, with an effect of looking past, through and beyond to discover other images. This experience was like moving through cliff areas, where not all is revealed at once, as opposed to an open vista or panorama.

In the panoramic presentation of Bea Maddock's *Terra Spiritus* at the National Gallery of Victoria (Figure 18), viewers circumnavigated the work. In contrast, *Hills' Edge* invited more circuitous and multidirectional movement, encouraged by the panelled arrangement, with meanderings and dialogue possible between the two sets of contrasting work and ways of seeing places. The spaces in between panels implied the bodily presence (or absence) of a viewer.



Figure 22: Sue Henderson, *Cataract Gorge: vertical visions – a visual exploration of space, place and perception*, 2008-9, Cataract Gorge Basin Café, Launceston, (installation view)

My first exhibition at Cataract Gorge Basin Café, *Cataract Gorge: vertical visions – a visual exploration of space, place and perception*, included various configurations of large-scale ink paintings of views in series, in various configurations throughout 2008-9. Situated overlooking the First Basin and some cliff areas of Cataract Gorge, the exhibition offered an alternative way of seeing this locality through my representations of verticality directly referencing the site. A viewer could examine the work whilst being positioned within the same environment that provided the source for the work, allowing alternating vision between paintings and place. Framing for the protection of the works resulted in the interesting phenomena of reflections in the perspex of the actual cliffs depicted in the paintings: however, the reduction of surface effects highlighted the importance of tactility in presenting the work.

People reported looking at the cliffs differently after seeing my exhibitions at Cataract Gorge Basin Café, an effect that may be enhanced by the proximity of the source and its representations. The café setting encouraged longer, more contemplative viewing periods, by an audience not necessarily intending to have an art experience. The option of viewing works by chairlift was a unique way of seeing paintings that explore height, depth and verticality.

These four exhibitions demonstrated the value of research by exhibition in the investigation of technical aspects of working in a series, including exploration of formats, dimensions, spacing and the impact of architectural features, demonstrating how sequenced, contrasting viewpoints can convey vertical encounters with a place.

Digital photography was used to document exhibitions for reflection and analysis of the reception of my work in series. Examination of paintings through the camera lens became an investigative tool, leading to further developments in the studio.

CHAPTER 5

Re-viewing paintings through photography

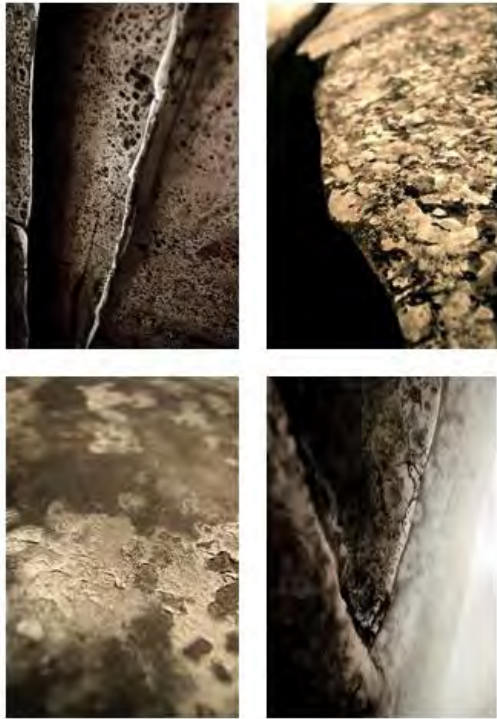


Figure 23: Sue Henderson, Digital prints, 2008

Just as my paintings reveal a different way of seeing an actual place through exploring a climber's vertical visions, photography provides alternative ways of viewing my paintings. In part of this project, the painted landscape became a site for re-presentation and re-picturing through another lens, that of the digital camera. In my project, I used photography to document inaccessible sites in Cataract Gorge and to record and analyse ways of displaying work. This medium also offered novel ways of manipulating some of the spatial relationships within paintings, including more extreme close-ups, an exploration of depth-of-field effects and exaggerations of viewpoints. The enlargement of surfaces through photography highlighted material processes active in the creation of paintings, leading to developments based on exploration of the kinetic qualities of ink through manipulation of natural processes (gravity, osmosis), and utilizing the expressive potential of the paper (see Chapter 6). Subsequent developments included the breakdown of the frame and manipulation of proximity of the viewer's point of view by increasing the size of paintings and the relative scale of elements in relation to the viewer's body in the paste-up series (see Chapter 7). The scrutiny of paintings through the photographic lens led to a re-examination of the qualities intrinsic to painting as a mode of representation in evoking an experience of a place.

Observation of the materials and patterns in my paintings magnified through the camera lens increased my awareness of the dynamics occurring within the ink and methods of application that reflected relevant performative actions. This process was reminiscent of looking close-up at many types of cliffs and observing how miniature features often reflect the bigger picture of a place in terms of geological formation and rock structures. The close-up review of my paintings through photography facilitated a shift in focus from how the materials created the illusion of a particular site's geological features or spatial arrangements, to considering what the ink and paper was actually doing, how this paralleled the dynamics on site (for example the effects of water and gravity are active in mark-making in paintings and on the Cataract Gorge site) and how the kinetic aspects of material processes share correspondences with a climber's encounter with a locality.

The photographic process allowed the observation of elements of my paintings without the framing device of the edges of the paper, which had been used to carefully compose and contain pictorial elements of the vertical views. Reframing using the camera allowed ink elements to float in the picture plane, released from previous compositional restrictions. Further possibilities were revealed in the negative spaces of paper and their potential for metaphor such as the dislocation of the fall or as the space occupied by the climber's/viewer's body in opposition to the cliff face/ gallery wall.

Close-up photographs removed markers of scale and therefore increased the ambiguity of size and content, raising such questions as, is it a microscopic or an aerial viewpoint? I had examined this idea in early stages of the project where cropping became a device for increasing ambiguity. Confusion of scale can occur when climbing close-up to a space or surface so large it cannot be properly viewed or perceived, often on big cliffs where markers of scale become ambiguous or difficult to read. These ideas also led to a play on scale in the *Rising damp* series where lichen-like shapes are radically enlarged in relation to the viewer's body and the indeterminate scale of *Porker Pinnacle paste-up* (see Chapter 7).

The camera lens allowed a replication of the close proximity and angle from which a climber sees a cliff when climbing. From this camera position, depth-of-field effects, points of focus and extreme viewpoints can be created like those experienced in the climber's visual perception. Watkins uses a similar viewpoint in *Cathedral rock*, (1861) (Figure 11) in which the camera is positioned low on the valley floor and directed up to a monumental cliff. The proximity of this extreme close-up point of view is not achieved fully by the frontal and stationary orientation of the viewer when looking at

paintings exhibited in traditional gallery style, an issue partially addressed in the development of large-scale paste-up paintings (see Chapter 7).

The effect of tilting the camera to create more radical viewpoints resulted in an exaggeration of perspective lines in my paintings, amplifying the sense of space receding upwards or dropping away. Complementing this effect of increased depth or height was the change in scale whereby up-close marks and patterns became enlarged, while those further away from the camera became smaller, increasingly out of focus and lighter in tone. These effects are consistent with how the eye sees and with aerial perspective used in Western pictorial constructions to imitate the optical effects of atmosphere on receding space. Using narrow depth of field camera settings could achieve a selective focus suggestive of a climber's gaze, when focus is on what is just in reach or slightly out of reach, with only a cursory glance through to distant space.

In my paintings the use of aerial perspective principles to create vertical receding space was limited by the osmotic drying processes that I used to create texture. Tonally lighter dilutions of ink implying distant space formed larger patterned marks, the opposite effect of scale relative to distance. Photography could overcome these limitations of painting processes and offered greater control of points of focus. The increase in markers of aerial perspective in photographs led to some viewers interpreting images as actual climbing routes in Cataract Gorge, rather than photographs of paintings. But while the filtering of textures and tonal systems through the camera lens seemed to make the images more true to life for some, other essential qualities were lost. The technology of the single lens reduced tactile features in the images, making them appear flat, despite an increase in visual markers of scale, depth and height. Distancing from the tactile qualities in the paintings seemed to diminish sensory engagement, highlighting the importance of activating a range of perceptual modalities in addressing the aims of my project. Direct experiences of perceiving a vertical place occur through both the visual and bodily engagement of a climber, with kinaesthetic knowledge and touch contributing to visual perception. These photographic experiments reinforced my desire to use materials implying surface qualities with direct processes of making, where the experience of making or viewing is not mediated through another lens or distancing technology.

The experience of the camera converting the paintings to digital images with an increased objectivity or realism limited the ambitions of my project. This led me to reconsider how the qualities intrinsic to painting as a medium could embody the ephemerality of the climber's experience with a place,

with evocative rather than descriptive outcomes. For example the documentary qualities in photographs, such as Carleton Watkins' *Cathedral rock* (1861) (Figure 11) and Thomas Cooper's photograph from the *Indication piece* series (1999-2000) (Figure 3) emphasize the evidential authority of the photograph in its capacity to attest to the existence of these places. Crowther (2009, p. 141) notes that the referent of the photograph must have existed (based on the images mode of representation), while painting offers only direct traces of the gestures of the artist by means of which the referent is represented. The event of the climb as an ephemeral activity is made by bodily gestures, like the painting, the referent of which may or may not have existed.

Cooper further evokes time and history by his title which references a historical event but we know that the image was taken in a single, separate moment in time. The photograph appears as evidence of an encounter between an event and a photographer, which stops time (Berger 2005, p. 70). Unlike the single moment of the shutter, the painted image is achieved through the bodily gestures of the painter, with periods of activity, rest and rhythm paralleling the movements of a climber's body through vertical space. According to Berger (2005, p. 70), a drawing or painting forces us to stop and enter its time – it encompasses time. In traversing the vertical view, the climber and the painter have their own methods of marking time and both activities exist as durational events involving the physicality of the body. In painting, the marks that compose the work define the passage of time within the making process.

While the referent of the cliff exists to be photographed, the climber's vertical view has subjective, sensory and experiential aspects with imaginative, metaphoric and psychological dimensions. Painting has histories of exploring such themes including the sublime and subjective responses and can imply these qualities in ways that other mediums cannot. This desire for increasingly speculative or open interpretations was subsequently developed in my *Rising damp* series of paste-up paintings in which portrayals of the structures and elements encountered by a climber in cliff environments became less literal and more speculative responses were encouraged (see Chapter 7). My *Spaces in between* series (Figure 36) invited psychological, metaphoric or emotive readings through the pairing of visual images with texts suggestive of interpersonal dynamics or inner states (see Chapter 6).

Observations made explicit through photography as an investigative tool led to a greater emphasis on the performance of materials and the expressive potential of the spaces in between, including those on the marked paper and the gallery walls separating paintings.

CHAPTER 6

The performance of materials and the spaces between

Looking down at the crack below emerging from the paper, shimmering and wet, I move and stretch along the painting horizontal below me. I lightly spray the top with water and carefully add another ink wash, a cobalt blue layer of receding cliff surface. Resuming a crouched position, I return to the base of the picture, where twin cracks sit wide on the page narrowing as they rise through the pictorial space. I remember climbing 'Gabriel', the painting's referent, imagining the feeling of suspension above the air and water below, body swinging from one crack to the other in a push pull of balance and tension between arms and legs. Now in a horizontal axis, like the climb has fallen, I move over its surface, adding ink dilutions to mark an edge here, a small ledge there, hands around brush, sponge or spray bottle instead of rough dolerite. Responding to what appears before me, like the climber reaching for the next hold, one mark leads to another in a sequence of events momentary and unique. The painting proceeds in rushes of gestural movement followed by pauses while planning next moves. After applying a final layer of rock salt to create osmosis in the dilutions, I tilt the paper to enhance directional effects of gravity. I sit for a few moments and watch the microcosmic world appearing and moving in the ink.

In the communication of a climber's perceptions of a vertical encounter of a place, material processes play a significant role. The performative function of the image is highlighted through the bodily enactment of climbing movements during the construction of a painting and in the activity of materials and painting processes. Osmotic drying processes, the effects of gravity and directional movement reference the dynamics of the site and between a climber and a place. The kinetic and responsive qualities of ink are emphasized, with a focus on tactility to reflect a climber's intimate, temporal and sensory encounter with a site. The contribution of the expressive potential of ink on paper, negative spaces and painting processes in the creation of meaning was a significant area of development influenced by artists Lui Guo Song, Richard Kimberly and Neil Frazer which I discuss later in this chapter.

An understanding of places develops through the layering of memories and experiences and results in a vocabulary of images existing across time and in sequences. In addition to creating visual and tactile links to the site, the building-up of surfaces and washes can be seen as metaphors for multiple experiences occurring in a locality, temporal engagement and repeated visits to a site. Tim Cresswell (2003, p. 279) describes how 'actual landscape becomes a palimpsest, a stratigraphy of practises and texts'. This idea is reflected in my project through making processes involving layering, whereby markers of time, action, processes and history are evident in the deposits of materials and patterns left on the paper. A stratigraphy of practices and texts occurs in climbing sites, with the layering of new routes, bolts, shoe scuff marks and chalk residue, the retelling of stories and

documentation of events, the re-climbing of routes with different variants, and the re-making of routes through weathering.

Cataract Gorge is formed and constantly altered by the effect of water. The use of watery dilutions of ink references the importance of the element of water on site, including histories of human utilitarian usage (drinking, washing and powering the hydroelectric station and flour mill), recreational usage and geological formation (Richards & Johnson 2007). There is a paradox in the interplay of materials and referent, where delicate, watery layers of ink dilutions and fragile lacy surfaces convey the grit, strength and solidity of cliffs. This corresponds with the agency and strength of the human body, which coexists with its vulnerability, fragility and ephemerality in precarious positions on cliffs. My use of watery materials to describe rock surfaces becomes less contradictory when considering the effects of geological forces across extended time, where cliffs become less fixed and more fluid in their materiality. Gabriella Giannachi and Nigel Stewart (2005, p. 50) note how rock feels smooth and solid, expressive of sureness, certainty and dependability. However, when reconsidered in relation to the full array of chemical, geological and meteorological forces that continue to produce it, the rock can be experienced not just as an unfinished, unstable form but also through the temporality of the forces that are registered through that form (Giannachi & Stewart 2005, p. 50). Robert Macfarlane (2003, p. 43) also notes how through the 'spectacles of geology terra firma becomes terra mobilis', encouraging a reconsideration of what is solid when land is seen across deep time. Dilutions of ink re-enact the processes of geological formation and weathering of Cataract Gorge as they move from liquid to solid form, leaving traces of sediment and crystalline patterning on paper.

Peter Timms (1999, p. 12) describes how art about landscape, as distinct from landscape art, sets out to examine process: 'By harnessing natural forces artists deliberately blur the distinction between what is human creation and what is not, and downplay the notion of the art object as something separate and distinct from what it refers to'. In my project, process, as described by Timms, has been examined by using natural forces formative of and active in Cataract Gorge. The effects of gravity and movement on ink and processes related to water such as drying and osmosis act as agents in the creation of marks and surface (Figure 24). Gravity (and its consequence) is the force foremost in a climber's experience when negotiating multidirectional variants of vertical routes. Material processes reflect these dynamics by the manipulation of the effects of gravity on ink dilutions to explore direction, speed and contrasts in movement of marks, patterns and drips.

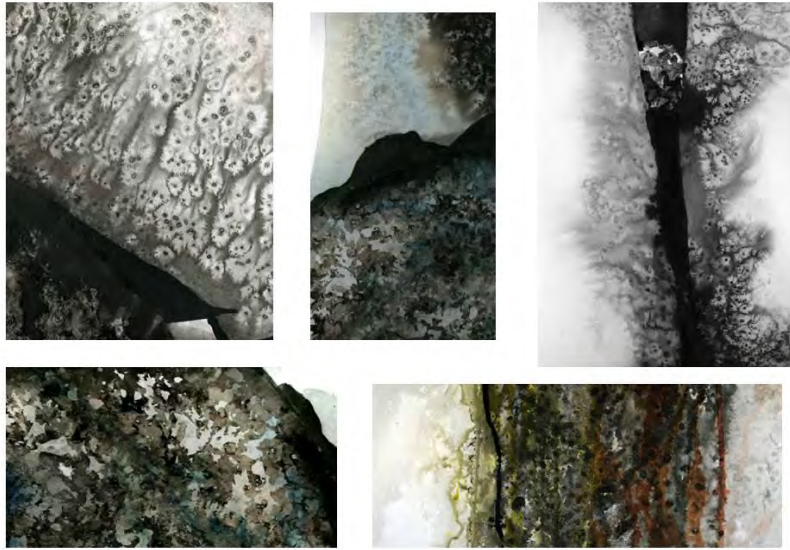


Figure 24: Sue Henderson, selected details demonstrating natural processes agential in paintings, 2009

The activity of ink dilutions is exciting to witness in the studio. Osmotic patterns form over time, changing, exposing layers beneath, with the thrill of a surface being revealed after drying overnight. Ink and water swirl with marbling effects, leak, bleed, shift with gravity, crystallize in processes that I cannot create or control – merely admire, encourage and respond to. Barbara Bolt (2004, p. 178) observed the agency of materials in art practice and describes processes in which:

... matter is not impressed upon but rather matter enters into a process in the dynamic interplay through which meanings and effects emerge. A picture emerges in and through the play of the matter of objects (the dynamic object), the matter of bodies, the materials of production and the matter of discourse.

Bolt describes the relationship between artist objects, materials and processes as 'no longer one of mastery ... all elements are co-responsible for the emergence of art' (2004, p. 9). This description is consistent with my observations in the studio, where my body's as the painter acts to create some elements of the painting in conjunction with the natural and uncontrollable processes in materials which also act as forces in the creation of paintings. The social and cultural traditions of picture making and the viewer's perceptions contribute to the construction and interpretations of my outcomes. Bolt's (2004, p. 178) term 'co-emergence' can be applied to the research processes between a researcher and a field of knowledge and the relationship between a climber (agent) and a cliff (matter) in the activation of vertical place. In my project a similar reversal of ideas of mastery and agency occurs, in that the cliff can be seen as drawing a climber through space or the field of knowledge and practice as leading a researcher through an active, emergent process (see Chapter 1).



Figure 25: Sue Henderson, *Upstream view of Brazen Serpent, Porker Pinnacle*, 2008, ink on paper, 120x 36 cm

Figure 26: Sue Henderson, *Tree route, Trackside Buttress*, 2008, ink on paper, 120x 36 cm

Figure 27: Sue Henderson, *Downstream view of Brazen Serpent, Porker Pinnacle*, 2008, ink on paper, 120x 36 cm

Material processes that utilize intrinsic movement such as the effects of gravity on ink and osmotic drying processes offer a way of extending the static image. In *Upstream view of Brazen Serpent, Porker Pinnacle* (Figure 25) osmotic patterns affected by gravity and movement while drying define the edges of an arête (sharp ridge of a cliff). In *Tree route, Trackside Buttress* (Figure 26) very wet dilutions of ink are used against drier applications to create depth of field and distance, emulating a climber's selective focus. Drips, sprays and spreading ink washes imply space and rhythm in *Downstream view of Brazen Serpent, Porker Pinnacle* (Figure 27).

A particular focus in part of my project has been to investigate ways of implying the dynamic experience of a climber's way of seeing while moving (Figures 28 to 30). In these paintings many layers of materials imply texture, with spray packs applied from multiple directions to convey movement and changes in a climber's focus and direction. Shifting surfaces are laid over depictions of rock structures to emulate a climber's scanning gaze when moving close up over a cliff surface.



Figure 28: Sue Henderson, *The wrong man, Rightman Buttress*, 2009, ink and enamel on paper, 160 x 47 cm

Figure 29: Sue Henderson, *Bottom of Gabriel, Gabriel Buttress*, 2009, ink and enamel on paper, 160 x 47 cm

Figure 30: Sue Henderson, *Top of Gabriel, Gabriel Buttress*, 2009, ink and enamel on paper, 160 x 47 cm

Such experimentation with materials draws on the work of Lui Guo Song whose survey exhibition in Hong Kong (2005) expanded my perceptions of the expressive potential for ink on paper processes.



Figure 31: Liu Guo Song, *Silvery woods amidst cloudy mountains: Tibet series, No. 16*, 2000, ink on paper, 91 x 182 cm

The work of Liu Guo Song, a pioneer and teacher of modern Chinese ink painting, revolutionizes the techniques of his artistic tradition through his innovative use of materials. By including marbling, collage and spraying, he prompts a rethinking of the calligraphic mark and revisits ideas of chance and spontaneity in the use of ink. While eschewing traditional tools (the brush), Lui Guo Song remains loyal to the fundamental mood and spirit of Chinese painting. He opposes the imitation of the West and ancient Chinese traditions, and aims to create a new and authentic language for Chinese ink painting (Chu, Li, Daojian and Mu 2004). His paintings, such as *Silvery woods amidst cloudy mountains: Tibet series, No. 16* (Figure 31), evoke landscapes or the elemental nature or the cosmos, without literally depicting actual sites. Lui has described this as ‘an emanation of [my] instinctive affection for nature’ (Chu et al. 2004, p. 14). Emphasizing the material processes inherent in ink painting rather than spatial arrangements, he makes works suggestive of natural places and atmospheric conditions, often implied in titles. Lui’s collective works involve extensive manipulations and experimentation with ink on paper and material processes are both visible and encouraged.

Like Liu Guo Song, Jonathon Kimberley extends his tradition of representation, searches for alternative forms and codes of expression and evokes ideas of place through his innovative uses of materials.



Figure 32: Jonathan Kimberley and pura-lia meenamatta (Jim Everett), *meenamatta lena walantalaninany (meenamatta water country) – beyond the colonial construct: meenamatta map of unlandscape*, 2006, synthetic polymer, charcoal and text on linen, diptych, each work: 244 x 244 cm, (eight panels in total)

Kimberley uses drips, layers, stains, charcoal fragments, text and multi-directional marks in large panelled paintings to create rich and engaging surfaces. In Figure 32, the processes active in applications of his material strongly speak of the idea of ‘water country’ and provided clues for possible extensions of my use of ink dilutions to describe Cataract Gorge and its relationship to water. In this collaboration with indigenous poet pur-lia meenamatta (Jim Everett), other ways of perceiving, naming and sharing ideas about land are referred to and revealed. Narratives of place and intertextual relationships are explored and add layers of meaning: this influenced my titling of *The spaces in between* series (Figures 36 and 37) by the inclusion of texts from popular culture to expand possible readings of the work.

The idea of ‘unlandscape’ overtly reacts against traditions of landscape painting and indicates Kimberley’s intention to move beyond the colonial construct, also made clear in his title (Meenamatta and Kimberley 2006-7). The absence of traditional European markers or codes used historically to reference landscape representations reinforces his intention. Contemplating ‘unlandscape’ encouraged my examination of what traditional codes I could remove or extend while remaining within my project’s aims and cultural traditions. Like Kimberley I was aware that the absence of conventional features was in itself a potent semiotic option (O’Toole 1994).

In an attempt to move beyond the colonial construct, I used alternative pictorial structures from picturesque compositional traditions (as discussed in the introduction). Unlike Kimberley’s project, my aim has been to communicate aspects of what is seen, hence I have a continued reliance on perspectival systems to convey a climber’s vision and spatial relationships in high places. However,

there remains the possibility of reducing information and the cues of perspective and spatial relationships with multiple entry points (rather than a singular viewing position) and emphasizing other sensory modalities such as touch. Further possibilities are explored in the significance of the spaces in between elements in my paintings including the gallery walls and the breakdown of framing structures.

In my project negative space was initially deployed as a formal compositional element to imply infinite space, sky and light and to describe geological features. When white spaces were left, a greater sense of continuity of space or connection with the blank space of white walls occurred than with more filled-in paintings or when paintings had pronounced edges. This led to a further experimentation in the dissolving of edges and the use of white negative spaces in compositions in order to suggest limitless or undefined space.

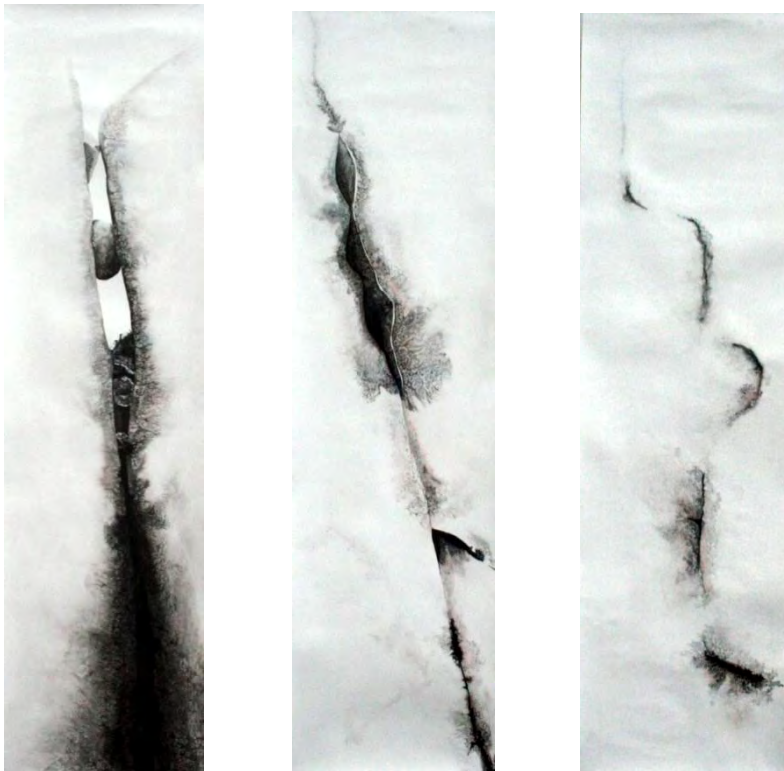


Figure 33: Sue Henderson, *Looking for the heart, Shimmy Shyster Buttress*, 2008, ink on paper, 175 x 47 cm

Figure 34: Sue Henderson, *Left hand man, Rightman Buttress*, 2008, ink on paper, 175 x 47 cm

Figure 35: Sue Henderson, *Lost in space*, 2008, ink on paper. 175 x 47 cm

Figures 33, 34 and 35 are examples of forms extended to become increasingly sparse and ambiguous while allowing the white page to be a more essential element. There is a simplification of forms, while still retaining some authenticity to specificity of place. The negative spaces become more significant in the imagery and imply continued space with the adjacent gallery walls.

I undertook further visual investigations that led to *The spaces in between* (Figure 36), a series which examined spatial relationships between cliff structures at Cataract Gorge and emphasized the air between rock formations. Surfaces evoking textured cliffs were created by extending and combining previous experiments with the expressive qualities of ink and included resists, tearing, scrunching, dipping and washing out ink as well as osmotic and gravity based drying processes. The space in between rock formations is the space that the climber occupies and moves within and into which the viewer is invited into by proxy. The work was created as a series to suggest shifting, dynamic space occupation, or conversely, absences. The effects of gravity, height, the air below and the spaces between cliffs are powerful in a climber's interactions with a place. This is represented by the weight, resonance and authority of the stark white paper between cliff structures.



Figure 36: Sue Henderson, *The spaces in between*, 2009, ink on paper, each work 95 x 45 cm

Climbing routes in Cataract Gorge, as in other places, are named by their first ascensionists, who claim and categorize new routes using geographic, metaphoric, imaginative or literary references. In a reversal of the naming of vertical paths negotiated by climber's, I title the spaces between the cliffs depicted in my paintings. This naming of the air and the spaces between land are an ironic comment on the colonizing processes intrinsic to the exploration and naming of land, including those in climbing subcultures. My sources for these titles include quotes from contemporary authors and songwriters describing the significance of the spaces in between, either in creative processes or in human relationships (for example Figure 37). *The spaces in between* was shown in Cataract Gorge Basin Café (Figure 47), with titles and source quotes to encourage the contemplation of potential meanings by viewers, and aiming to evoke metaphorical readings suggestive of space or interstices occurring in interpersonal dynamics or internal psychological processes.



'There's a narrow margin,
Just room enough for regret
In the inch and a half between
Hey, how you've been?
And can I kiss you yet?'

Ani DiFranco, 1999 'Providence' on
To the teeth, Righteous babe records

Figure 37: Sue Henderson, *Narrow margin, near miss*, 2009, ink on paper, 95 x 45cm

In addition to observations of the white paper and walls made through the photographic lens (see Chapter 5) other influences on my work included the empty spaces in Neil Frazer's *Central Australia paintings* (2007) in which white canvas is left to describe sky and water (Browne 2007) (Figure 38). My particular interest in these paintings was in the white canvas sections rather than the heavily textured rock surfaces. I found my eye constantly drawn to the blank shapes and the space (air or water) suggested by the absence of material.



Figure 38: Neil Frazer, *Bend*, 2007, acrylic on canvas, 137 x 137 cm

Figure 39: Neil Frazer in studio with works from *Central Australia paintings*, 2007

In the photograph of Neil Frazer in his studio (Figure 39) there was an incidental interaction between the negative space in the painting and wall below, which was similar to observations of my sparser paintings (such as Figures 33 to 35) when seen from a distance against a white wall. This effect became a focus of intentional manipulation in extending imagery beyond the boundaries of the paper edge and moving onto the walls.

My interest in the potential of negative spaces was further developed by compositions in Chinese landscape paintings where the negative spaces are categorized, analyzed and named with traditional arrangements of empty space repeated throughout history. Rather than being influenced by specifics, I found the systemization of these spaces significant, leading to my further emphasis on space in between, both on the painting support (paper) and on the walls.

This space is most clearly defined at the edge of the paper on which I work.

Crowther (2009, p. 52) describes two functions of the edges of the paper. Firstly, it offers a structure which allows pictorial content to be arranged and guides internal pictorial organization, as a limit or boundary. This is consistent with Malcom Andrews' (1999, p. 5) definition: 'A frame establishes outer boundaries and gives landscape definition. The frame literally defines the landscape, determining outer limits and in that sense the landscape is constituted by the frame'. Initially the edges of my pages were considered in this way, in terms of guiding composition and perspective systems within a painting, enabling pictorial space to convey or exaggerate spatial aspects of a place from a climber's point of view. Negative space was utilized to activate the spaces of the walls as a continuum in my works in series.

Crowther's (2009, p. 52) second function of the edges of the page or frame is as an open-ended device, as something to be continued, notionally, beyond. He describes the framing function of rectangular formats as suggesting 'virtual openness' appearing to extend outwards in several directions, right and left and above the stationary viewer as well as in front through the use of perspective (Crowther, 2009 p. 55). In my series of vertical format paintings (for example Figures 33, 34 and 35) the paper is flush with the wall in an attempt to convey a sense of continuity or unclear boundaries of space. Some imagery impinges on the space of the white wall, suggesting the vertical (and horizontal) extension of space, linking individual paintings. This implies an immersive space or a landscape with undefined outer limits, with views as snapshots of a moment in an expansive place.

Framing devices have the practical effect of demarcating pictorial space and signifying its difference from ordinary perception (Crowther 2009, p. 54). In my vertical format paintings the edges are understood as marking out distinctive pictorial space. What happens when the conventional parallel edges are removed? Strategies for activating the wall space and extending the elements of paintings beyond the limits of the edges of paper became my new direction for investigation.

CHAPTER 7

Re-framing vertical visions: Moving from the paper to the walls

Readjusting my position for better reach, I feel my core muscles stabilize and hold firm as I stretch, aware of the short drop below. In a moment of breath-holding delicacy and control, I make the placement. On this occasion I am not placing climbing gear or reaching for a hold on rock, but am pasting a cut-out painting, the fragile rice paper wet with glue, positioned high on the wall above my ladder. Like the climber maintaining split second stability on a fine edge, my success depends on careful control of my body in relation to the effects of gravity, as the paper shifts between my fingers. One hold leads to another, one painting's placement suggests positioning of the next, as step by step the climb/painting is revealed. A unique improvisation in place-making emerges.

In describing the act of drawing, John Berger (2005, p. 3) observes that:

... each mark you make on the paper is a stepping stone from which you proceed to the next, until you have crossed your subject as though it were a river, have put it behind you.

This process – the performance of drawing/mark making – is reminiscent of the activity of climbing, where one hold leads to another until you find yourself at the top of a cliff. The painter of the vertical view crosses the climbing route in a similar way, depositing ink marks on the page, sequentially in bursts, step by step until the view is complete. In this chapter two bodies of work are discussed: *Rising damp* and *Porker Pinnacle paste-up*.

The shift from the strictly aligned vertical formatted works to irregular free-floating pools of pigmented paper glued to the wall marked a significant departure in my project (see Figure 40). This move allowed me to link the performative actions of climbing to the physical dynamism of creating, assembling and installing the work, in the vertical plane.

In the series, *Rising damp*, the elements of paintings significant to me as a climber were cut out and pasted directly onto architectural surfaces in differing contexts. Each piece of these paste-ups acts like a mark in a drawing, with individual expressive qualities, direction and scale, one placement leading to the next, like stepping stones or a sequence of climbing holds. Crack-like lines lead into unoccupied spaces, linking areas and drawing a viewer's gaze or body through space. Scale is manipulated, with some lichen-like shapes radically enlarged in relation to the human body then tapering off to miniature spots. A range of directional marks suggests different speeds of paint application from fast flicking to slow; pools of ink dilutions drying create organic, fluid shapes. Intricately cut from their paper supports and released from the edges that contained them, these painted elements are arranged creeping along walls.

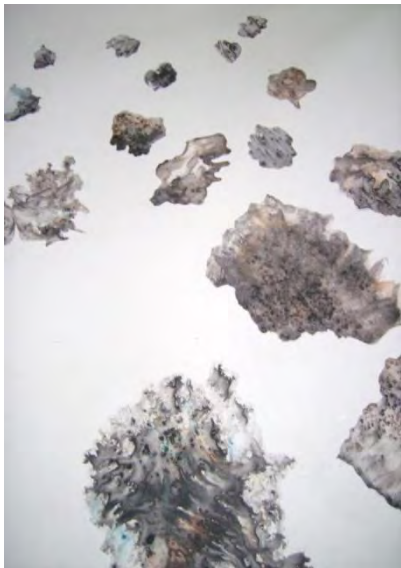


Figure 40: Sue Henderson, detail from *Rising Damp* series, 2010, ink on rice paper, (partial installation view)

Berger (2005, p. 50) also notes the importance of the space in between marks:

Drawings are only notes on paper. The secret is the paper. The paper becomes what we see through the lines but remains itself ... In a few great drawings everything appears to exist in space, the complexity of everything vibrates – yet one is looking only at a project on paper. Reality and the project become inseparable. One finds oneself at the threshold before the creation of the world.

The ontological effect between wall and cut-out components in the creation of the installation parallels the symbiotic relationship between algae and fungi in the Cataract Gorge lichens as well as that of the climber and cliff in the creation of the climb. The wall becomes virtual space or ground in pictorial space. Wall spaces and cut-out paintings exist as separate entities, yet become inseparable when in relationship.

The cut-out elements reference crack structures and lichens in Cataract Gorge, resembling mould or insidious rising damp, with both a whimsical and sinister edge. Each piece has a unique configuration of flowing ink marks suggestive of movement, flow and texture. A close view of these paintings may evoke ambiguous or multiple readings, with interplay between the literal and the imaginative– is it a landscape within a landscape – lichen, trees, clouds, vegetation or abstract painterly forms; is it a microscopic or distant view, an aerial or shifting viewpoint?

The breakdown of the frame generates new ways of activating gallery spaces and challenges pictorial conventions, particularly the tradition of picturesque depictions of land which relies on framing devices to organize spatial arrangements. As the eye moves from the cut-out to the walls,

the boundaries of distinctive pictorial space are challenged so that the role of the frame appears to be overtaken by architectural features, for example the edge of a wall, or extends into space, questioning the boundaries of the picture: is it where the painting elements cease or does it extend into space beyond? These innovations in my work marked a performative shift from how a place is seen to how a place is experienced by a climber in an immersive environment.

The activation of wall space and a similar play on scale is achieved in Christl Berg's photographic work where she installs cut-out digital prints directly onto walls, such as in *Intrusion* (2006) (Figure 41). Each piece slightly raised, with some works backed with colour to create a reflective, luminous afterglow on the wall behind the image, this work exemplifies the deployment of what Crowther (2009, p. 42) has described as the proxy background. This phenomenon occurs in the case of a cut out shape, where the three dimensional appearance (of the figure in the figure/ground relationship) utilizes the surrounding physical context as ground.



Figure 41: Christl Berg, *Intrusion*, 2006, cut out digital print (detail)

Figure 42: Christl Berg, *Float*, 2005, Carnegie Gallery, Hobart

Berg uses these proxy backgrounds in large-scale installations such as *Float* (2005) (see Figure 42), to create immersive experiences for viewers in order to communicate the experience of being in land; extending conventions of landscape photography which often present a distancing, totalizing view (Berg 2004). Berg utilizes a range of installation strategies, including the frieze as an open visual device, inviting physical movement and imagining beyond the material borders of images (2004, p. iii).

Similarly, Nancy Spero employs the frieze in *Cri du Coeur* (2005) (Figure 43), taking her audience on a physical and symbolic journey of grief. Repetition and layering add intensity to the work as the viewer is surrounded by a frieze of endless weeping figures. The white empty walls stretch above. Jon Bird (1996, p. 60) describes this as space signifying both a narrative and formal value; it is

bounded and architectural or unbounded and suggestive of either the 'infinite' (the implication of endless extensions) or the 'void' (the concept of inner space or loss of the self). While Spero deals with concepts of the figurative and narrative based in feminist discourse, in my installations wall spaces signify aspects of vertical encounters in space: rest spots in between activity, infinite space such as the air above or the void below.



Figure 43: Nancy Spero, *Cri du Coeur*, 2005, hand printing on paper, dimensions variable, Galerie Lelong, New York (installation view)

Spero employs a range of innovative strategies to activate gallery spaces, as a means of questioning institutional and gendered power dynamics. In my work *Constructing vertical visions: Cataract Gorge – a visual exploration of space, place and perception*, my intentions are more specifically located in place and focus in that the activation of non-traditional spaces within the gallery provides a semiotic function that marks a break from the grand narratives of the landscape traditions, including the picturesque.



Figure 44: Nancy Spero, *Ballad von der Judenhure Marie Sanders III* (Brecht), 1998, hand printing on walls, dimensions variable, Festpielhaus, Hellerau, Dresden (installation view)

Responsiveness to architectural features, as seen in Spero's installations (Figures 43 and 44), is a feature of my *Rising damp* series, particularly the installation at the Cataract Gorge Basin Café where the bathroom areas were part of the installation site. Paintings were placed in relationship to plumbing fixtures, doors, corridors and walls, encouraging a viewer to walk through and discover elements (Figure 49). Architectural features were used as proxy framing devices with other sections of the installation more open. Viewers can enter and begin reading the work from a number of entry points, as one can experience a natural environment like the Cataract Gorge from a number of approaches.

Both Spero and Berg install their work in gallery settings. My paste-up series *Rising damp* has been explored in both gallery and less formal settings, where locations invested with various meanings or associations extend readings of the work. I investigated the site as an element in the creation of meaning in several other settings, including: corridors and wall spaces at the School of Visual and Performing Arts at Inveresk (one example in Figure 45); a collaboration in the bathroom of a domestic residence and on a nearby flood marker (Figure 46); in bathrooms and the dining area of the Cataract Gorge Basin Café (Figure 48) and in a light well, column and rising from the floor in the group show *Sosue me* (Figure 50).



Figure 45: Sue Henderson, version 1 of *Rising damp* series, 2009, Academy of the Arts, Inveresk, ink on paper (installation view)

The first test pieces (Figure 45) evolved at the School of Visual and Performing Arts at Inveresk at the time when the school was on flood alert due to the nearby convergence of the South Esk (the river running through Cataract Gorge) and the North Esk rivers coinciding with rain, wind and king tides. These were visual responses to the anxiety of potential impact of uncontrollable forces of nature on the art school site. The flood theme was continued in *Dry Street bathroom collaboration* (Figure 46).



Figure 46: Penny Mason and Sue Henderson, *Dry street bathroom collaboration*, 2009, private residence, Dry Street, Invermay (installation views)

At Cataract Gorge Basin Café, paintings in frames from *The spaces in between* series (Figure 36) (discussed in Chapter 6) have been combined with installations of ink paintings from *Rising damp* which appeared to infiltrate the northern side of the building, permeating the toilets and creeping up the café walls. Lacy, delicate, lichen-like forms climb up from the floor in spatial arrangements playing with scale, suggesting the actions of rising and falling (Figure 49).



Figure 47: Sue Henderson, *Rising damp* (installation detail) near *The spaces in between*, 2009, Cataract Gorge Basin Café, framed works each 95 x 45cm

The Cataract Gorge Basin Café version of *Rising damp* (Figure 49) is a site-specific installation of ink paintings pasted directly on to the walls and referring to the surrounding environment of Cataract Gorge. Cracks on walls were reminiscent of those between the large dolerite boulders and cliffs outside, formed by geological forces and constantly eroded by water flow. This work references histories of utilitarian and recreational usage of water and flooding on site.



Figure 48: View from chairlift of Cataract Gorge Basin Café with *Rising damp* and *The spaces in between*, December 2009

In October 2009, floodwaters came to the tops of the swings outside the Cataract Gorge Basin Café (Figure 48). *Rising damp* aims to raise issues of the politics of water flow and effects of climate change on places subject to flooding, possibly provoking a degree of unease in a viewer. The installation intends to evoke some of the mystery, wonders and consequences of natural processes in action. The proximity of the source and its referents invites viewers to look more closely at the installation and deduce the relationships between the actual place and the artwork.



Figure 49: Sue Henderson, *Rising damp*, 2009, Cataract Gorge Basin Café (partial installation views)

The use of unconventional areas for the display of work was continued in the group show *Sosueme* at Arts Alive in Launceston (Figure 50). My paste-up work was installed in areas of the gallery not usually used for the exhibition of paintings, such as a column, a lower corner near the door and an adjacent lightwell, further testing possibilities for extending beyond the gallery style 'framing' of works and questioning traditional expectations of a visual art experience.



Figure 50: Sue Henderson, *Sosueme* at Arts Alive, Launceston, 2010 (partial installation views)

The contribution of meaning through the location of the work allows concepts of site-specific and installation art to intersect with my project. Reiss describes three characteristics of installation art including: that works are produced at the site of exhibition in relation to its specific features; that the site is some kind of gallery space (thus differentiating it from site specific art) and that the artist treats an indoor space as a single situation (cited by Osbourne 2001, p. 148). My paste-ups are assembled, with responses to the physical features of the location contributing to the arrangements of components. The sites that I have selected have been gallery spaces and other locations, although the work is not designed exclusively for or reliant on a specific site for meaning, therefore is not exclusively site-specific. For example, *Rising damp* was initially installed at the School of Visual and Performing Arts at time of flood alert (Figure 45). Awareness of potential flooding added to perceived meanings but the work conveyed other meanings without this knowledge.

The activity of installation has the sense of producing the work as a physical entity in the act of establishing it within a space (Osbourne, 2001 p. 152). Such a work of art depends on having a relation or characteristics of another entity (for example, a visual resemblance to lichens or rock structures); therefore, the physical reality of the work can be considered an instantiation or installation of its idea (Osbourne 2001, p. 152). Expanding the concept of site specificity from physical location to cultural space through the deployment of the material marker (the installation) activates places such as the toilets at Cataract Gorge Basin Café (Figure 49) to become temporarily sites of contemporary art. This concept of installation as an event of representation of an idea from a field of possibilities aligns with the momentary event of a temporal and ephemeral encounter with a vertical place.

My paste-ups are interventions in a site through painting, referencing a specific place and evoking a particular way of encountering it. Smaller mould-like elements from *Rising damp* positioned under sinks (Figure 49) and the stone-like surfaces of *Porker Pinnacle paste-up* (Figure 51) resemble the illusory effects of *trompe l'oeil*; however, the intention is not to deceive the eye. While the *trompe l'oeil* effect has a similar lack of restriction by the frame, deception via the substitution of the feigned for the real requires careful rendering in paint and for recognizable objects to be in actual dimensions (Battersby, 1974 p. 21). Conversely, in these paste-ups the ink marks are often random and unrefined, with an exaggerated play on the scale of the lichen-like shapes, features that differentiate my work from *trompe l'oeil*.



Figure 51: Sue Henderson, *Porker Pinnacle paste-up*, 2010, ink on rice paper, (installation views)

In *Porker Pinnacle paste-up*, the idea of the precipice carries with it the possibility of the fall. In my paste-up work, the white walls open that experience more than the picturing of precarious views. A paradox emerges, in which the walls allow entry to imagined spaces occupied by the climber in between the cliffs, the air, the void, the possibility of dislocation rather than the painted sections.

The grid structure in *Porker Pinnacle paste-up*, references mapping and employment of uncertain scale: as in a map there is a referent in another location (Cataract Gorge) of indeterminate comparative scale. The uniformity of the squares suggests equal units of time, like snapshots of seconds passing in a climber's visual field. The grid sets up units of close-up looking, like multiple choices where the eye is free to select any square for scrutiny (Casey 2005, p.84) similar to the climber scanning, selecting and focusing on a hold. The sum of the units is recognized as a pinnacle shape. The grid encourages a viewer to both closer examination and the general scanning overview, establishing a reciprocal relationship of small element and big picture (Casey 2005, p. 84). This way of examining a surface approximates a climber's visual intense focus on a hold or rock feature, while remaining aware of direction and position in space by using a scanning gaze. While *Porker Pinnacle paste-up*, suggests increased bulk and weight than the use of space in the *Rising damp* series, both present the climber's way of seeing with greater complexity than series of vertical views on paper.

The large scale of my paste-ups increases the proximity of the viewer and the work, creating immersive visual fields effects and activating a range of areas in the gallery space, stimulating a

scanning, searching gaze rather than the captured moment. The improvisory and ephemeral qualities of the paste-up paintings aligns them more closely to the activity of climbing than the vertical views on paper, hung in a conventional line. My paste-ups are physically closer to the wall, like the climber's intimacy and concern with contact and invite the viewer to occupy the position of the climber, in physical opposition to the cliff surface. With its proximity to the wall and vertical orientation, my paste-up strategy more closely parallels the physicality of a climber's encounter with the site.

Conclusion

This project, *Constructing vertical visions: Cataract Gorge – a visual exploration of space, place and perception*, has allowed me to come to 'know' a place, initially familiar through rock climbing, using painting as a mode of investigation. A language-based analogy is useful to explain the relationships between my paintings and physical sites. Components of paste-up paintings are like a lexicon: each single element suggests a different material aspect of a site, a momentary encounter or type of interaction. When arranged these components form a sentence with structure (syntax) and meaning (semantics). Once established in different contexts, such as a gallery, a bathroom, or Cataract Gorge Basin Café, meanings change in tone or extend (pragmatics or the use of language in context). My installations become instantiations of ideas about a place, vertical space and a climber's perceptions.

My conceptual, technical and curatorial skills in painting have been significantly extended by this project. Emphasis has been on my physical engagement with the materiality of the site and of painting, with a growing awareness of natural processes in action (such as weathering and lichen growth patterns) and the cultural meanings and associations that inform the experience of both climbing and painting. My observations of the Cataract Gorge cliffs have altered as the activity of painting enhanced my perception of subtleties and processes occurring in the environment. A symbiotic exchange developed, where greater awareness of processes occurring in paint reflecting experiences on the site led to deeper observation of the location. Engagement with the theoretical discourse on place-making; the consideration of visual context; histories of representation (including ideas of the sublime and vertical imagination); and the role of performative action (in climbing and in images) have increased my understanding of the meanings overlaid on a site. Investigation of the relational links between climbing, painting, practice-led and text-based research have enhanced and broadened my subsequent interactions with this site and others, with many exciting discoveries and connections. Importantly, I have become aware of my role as agent in the creating of meaning and place, through the imaginative and physical aspects of place-making through painting and climbing.

In this project the agential role of the body as a climber, as a painter and as a viewing subject is implicit through movement and sensorial experience. Both climbing and painting are created by the movement of the body intertwined with vision. In addition to visual engagement, I have also explored tactile and corporeal relationships with the work. The kinetic and expressive properties of ink and its responsiveness to the painter's movements when painting reflect temporal, ephemeral and dynamic encounters with a place. The performative aspects of the image are highlighted

through the enacting of climbing movements while painting vertical views and installing paste-up paintings. Paintings can be seen as traces of movement events compressed into a single moment of viewing.

Verticality is a key aspect addressed throughout the project, challenging Western landscape traditions such as picturesque depictions of places which primarily utilize a horizontal focus and foreground, midground and distant depictions of space from a single, static viewing position. Rather than the usual surveying view of landscape representation, the climber experiences a series of radical and multiple viewpoints that alternate between stationary rest points and seeing while moving. Rock features are observed through both a scanning and focused gaze, with an awareness of the body's position and trajectory in space and a focus on verticality. Such complexities of visual experience posed a challenge for communicating in a static two-dimensional medium. My initial paintings of vertical views utilized vertical formats and compositional strategies to reflect the climber's focus on the vertical plane, to parallel the upright human body in scale and orientation, and to imply a participatory position of a viewer. Later paste-up paintings were created by performative enactment of a climber's repetitive movements up and down a cliff wall, with sequential placing of elements emulating a climber finding a route via a series of holds. Subsequent experimental installations sought to extend the visual experience by activation of areas of the gallery not commonly used, encouraging a scanning gaze with awareness of other features present as well as focused observation of features in close proximity. The paste-up painting components enact the close contact and vertical orientation of the climber and cliff, encouraging a viewer to assume the same vertical position as the climber in opposition to the rock surface.

The climber's experience includes proximity and intimacy with the materiality of the cliffs, where divisions of foregrounds, midground and distant spaces are compressed or switched to a vertical orientation. Using photography as an investigative tool increased possibilities for materials to reflect intimate, sensory and temporal experiences of a site. The expressive potential of the spaces in between works, including the gallery walls became apparent. I explored the notion of proximity through cropped compositions in vertical works on paper and the enhancement of tactility in surfaces. Paste-up installations allowed the creation of an immersive environment with an increase in scale of paintings in relation to the viewer's body, exaggeration of relative scale (the enlarged sizes of lichen like shapes in the *Rising damp* series) and of indeterminate comparative scale (the use of the map-like grid in *Paste-up Porker pinnacle*).

The proximity of a climber to cliffs allows an observation of detail and minute alterations in rock surfaces. Tactility has been developed in ink surfaces using osmotic drying processes and the effects of gravity and directional movement to reference natural processes active on the site and reflecting the physical dynamics between a climber and a place. The fragility, irregular edges and placement of paper supports and the instability of ink pigment with its dynamic and unpredictable qualities embody the climber's temporal and ephemeral vertical encounters.

In addition to the constant extension of ideas and understandings drawn from engagement with critical discourse and related visual context, several other developments were significant. These included *The spaces in between series*, in which I began to impress my own meanings onto the site by naming the spaces between cliffs. Prior to this my focus was on revealing cultural constructions already in operation in the site. This series marked an increase in my imaginative responses and agency, extending the project beyond interpreting perceptions of the site to include concepts of active placemaking. The activation of actual wall spaces as signifiers; the extension of painted components beyond traditional framing devices; the utilization of areas not conventionally used in galleries; and the contribution of the locations of installations to possible meanings of the work were exciting stages in the project. These developments extended possibilities and generated new questions for future exploration including: what happens when you frame or install paste-ups in the actual cliff site? What other sites hold relevant meanings to combine with paste-up installations (Duck Reach power station, Kings Bridge, or the cliff sites themselves)? How can architectural features be utilized as more convincing instantiations of ideas of place and a climber's perceptions? What happens when paintings move from their positions flat on the walls? How can movement events be further investigated, within imagery and materials?

In my assessment exhibition, a series of vertical format works on paper demonstrating contrasting and sequential viewpoints are presented in conjunction with a series of paste-up paintings. Paste-up paintings include a grid format and paintings composed of irregular shapes, which examine physical and spatial elements that the climber encounters in Cataract Gorge. Traversing these two bodies of work reveals a shift from constructing a climber's vertical vision of a particular locality to a speculative, open-ended approach to vertical encounters of place, space and perception.

Through an investigation of relational links between climbing, painting, practice-led and text-based research, my project explores how different interpretations of verticality can extend possibilities of place-making. The importance of the vertical vision, beyond challenging the Western landscape view,

is its focus on engaging a viewer in an interpretation of place where the physicality of both painting and climbing act as a metaphor for the corporeal and imaginative dimension of the experience of a place. Interactions of vision, bodily movement, memory, material and imagination form a dynamic interplay. The work opens up the encounter with space and place through a realignment of the perceptual field to that of the unique bodily experience of the climber.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: List of exhibitions

Research by exhibition has included the following solo shows:

Vertical views and precarious positions: Re-presenting Cataract Gorge, S.p.a.c.e. gallery, Scotch Oakburn College, Launceston, 16th March to 13th April 2007.

Vertical views and precarious positions, e.Scape Wilderness Café Gallery, St Mary's, 21st April to 27th May 2007.

Cataract Gorge: vertical visions – a visual exploration of space, place and perception, Cataract Gorge Basin Café, Launceston, opened January 2008 until end of 2009 (various configurations).

Rising damp and The spaces in between, Cataract Gorge Basin Café, Launceston, opened December 2009 through 2010 (various configurations).

Group shows relevant to the project include:

Crunch, Academy Gallery, University of Tasmania, Launceston, 12th July to 9th September 2007.

Hills' Edge, a two person show with Jane Giblin, Burnie Regional Gallery, Burnie, 11th April to 16th May 2008.

University of Tasmania Accommodation Services Acquisitive Art Prize Exhibition, University of Tasmania, Hobart, awarded second prize, August 2007.

Cataract Gorge: Moods at Eskleigh Home, Perth, 16th to 27th November 2007.

Connections Art Exhibition, Scotch Oakburn College, Launceston, 15th to 17th March 2008.

Tasmanian Art Award at Eskleigh Exhibition, Eskleigh Home, Perth, 5th to 13th April 2008.

Get Staffed, The Powerhouse Gallery, Launceston, 23rd to 9th November, 2008

Brink, Poimena art award, Poimena Gallery, Launceston, 26th June to 23rd July, 2009.

Sosueme, Arts Alive, Launceston, 20th April to 8th May 2010.

Appendix 2: Documentation of assessment exhibition

List of Works

1. Entry gallery space: Eastern wall (left to right) Figures 1-9

On the way pinnacle, 2009, ink on paper, 162 x 50 cm

Half dozen, Double dozen Buttress, 2009, ink on paper, 196 x 47 cm

Left hand crack, Gabriel, Gabriel Buttress, 2009, ink on paper, 196 x 47 cm

Right hand crack, Gabriel, Gabriel Buttress, 2009, ink on paper, 196 x 47 cm

Price of meat, Fatman Buttress, 2008, ink on paper, 194 x 47 cm

Lingam, Feltham Buttress, 2009, ink on paper, 169 x 50 cm

Brazen serpent, Porker pinnacle, 2009, ink on paper, 174 x 46 cm

2. Entry gallery space: Western wall (left to right) Figures 10-16

Lost in space, 2008, ink on paper, 174 x 47 cm

Left hand man, Rightman Buttress, 2008, ink on paper, 174 x 47 cm

Looking for the heart, Shimmy Shyster Buttress, 2008, ink on paper, 174 x 46 cm

Passage through, 2008, ink on paper, 174 x 46 cm

Balancing rock, Uphill Buttress, 2008, ink on paper, 194 x 47 cm

Skinny girl, Fatman Buttress, 2009, ink on paper, 174 x 46 cm

Step down, descent route, Shady side, 2008, ink on paper, 176 x 47 cm

Lost Kingdom, 2008, ink on paper, 173 x 47 cm

3. Larger gallery space:

Constructing vertical visions: a climber's paste-up of space, place and perception, 2010,
ink on paper installation

- | | |
|------------------|---------------|
| a. Southern wall | Figures 17-21 |
| b. Western wall | Figures 22-23 |
| c. Northern wall | Figures 24-32 |
| d. Eastern wall | Figures 33-37 |

1. Entry gallery space: Eastern wall



Figure 1: Entry gallery space: Eastern wall (left to right):

On the way pinnacle, 2009, ink on paper, 162 x 50 cm

Half dozen, Double dozen Buttress, 2009, ink on paper, 196 x 47 cm

Left hand crack, Gabriel, Gabriel Buttress, 2009, ink on paper, 196 x 47 cm

Right hand crack, Gabriel, Gabriel Buttress, 2009, ink on paper, 196 x 47 cm

Price of meat, Fatman Buttress, 2008, ink on paper, 194 x 47 cm

Lingam, Feltham Buttress, 2009, ink on paper, 169 x 50 cm

Brazen serpent, Porker pinnacle, 2009, ink on paper, 174 x 46 cm



Figure 2: *On the way pinnacle*, 2009, ink on paper, 162 x 50 cm

Figure 3: *Half dozen, Double dozen Buttreass*, 2009, ink on paper, 196 x 47 cm



Figure 4: *Left hand crack*, Gabriel, Gabriel Buttress, 2009, ink on paper, 196 x 47 cm



Figure 5: *Right hand crack*, Gabriel, Gabriel Buttress, 2009, ink on paper, 196 x 47 cm



Figure 6: *Price of meat*, Fatman Buttress, 2008, ink on paper, 194 x 47 cm



Figure 7: *Lingam*, Feltham Buttress, 2009, ink on paper, 169 x 50 cm



Figure 8: *Brazen serpent, Porker pinnacle*, 2009, ink on paper, 174 x 46 cm

2. Entry gallery space: Western wall



Figure 9: Entry gallery space: Western wall (Left to right):

Lost in space, 2008, ink on paper, 174 x 47 cm

Left hand man, Rightman Buttress, 2008, ink on paper, 174 x 47 cm

Looking for the heart, Shimmy Shyster Buttress, 2008, ink on paper, 174 x 46 cm

Passage through, 2008, ink on paper, 174 x 46 cm

Balancing rock, Uphill Buttress, 2008, ink on paper, 194 x 47 cm

Skinny girl, Fatman Buttress, 2009, ink on paper, 174 x 46 cm

Step down, descent route, Shady side, 2008, ink on paper, 176 x 47 cm

Lost Kingdom, 2008, ink on paper, 173 x 47 cm



Figure 10: *Lost in space*, 2008, ink on paper, 174 x 47 cm; *Left hand man, Rightman Buttress*, 2008, ink on paper, 174 x 47 cm; *Looking for the heart, Shimmy Shyster Buttress*, 2008, ink on paper, 174 x 46 cm



Figure 11: *Passage through*, 2008, ink on paper, 174 x 46 cm



Figure 12: *Balancing rock, Uphill Buttress*, 2008, ink on paper, 194 x 47 cm

Figure 13: *Skinny girl, Fatman Buttress*, 2009, ink on paper, 174 x 46 cm



Figure 14: *Step down, descent route, Shady side*, 2008, ink on paper, 176 x 47 cm and *Lost Kingdom*, 2008, ink on paper, 173 x 47 cm



Figure 15: *Lost Kingdom*, 2008, ink on paper, 173 x 47 cm

3a. Larger gallery space: Southern wall



Figure 16: *Constructing vertical visions: a climber's paste-up of space, place and perception*, 2010, ink on paper, installation view – southern wall



Figure 17: *Constructing vertical visions: a climber's paste-up of space, place and perception*, 2010, ink on paper, installation view – southern wall



Figure 18: *Constructing vertical visions: a climber's paste-up of space, place and perception*, 2010, ink on paper, details of installation view – southern wall



Figure 19: *Constructing vertical visions: a climber's paste-up of space, place and perception*, 2010, ink on paper, details of installation view – southern wall



Figure 20: *Constructing vertical visions: a climber's paste-up of space, place and perception, 2010, ink on paper, details of installation view – southern wall*



Figure 21: *Constructing vertical visions: a climber's paste-up of space, place and perception, 2010, ink on paper, details of installation view – southern wall*

3b. Larger gallery space: Western wall



Figure 22: *Constructing vertical visions: a climber's paste-up of space, place and perception*, 2010, ink on paper, details of installation view – western wall

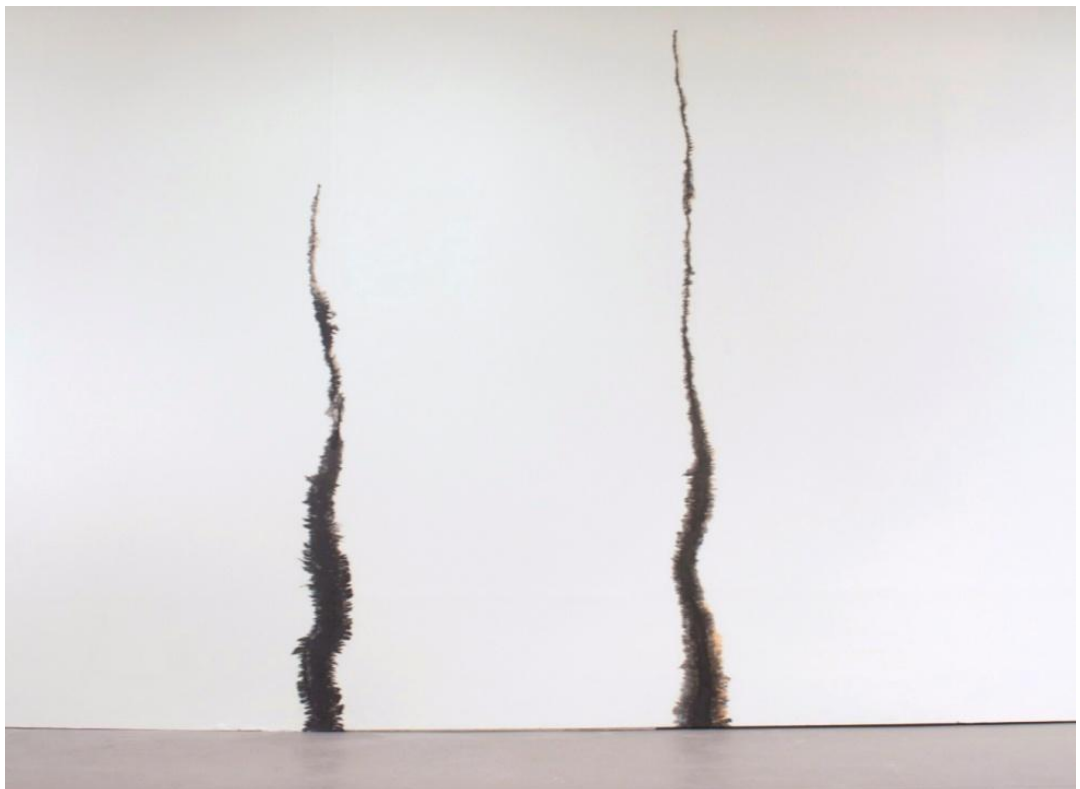


Figure 23: *Constructing vertical visions: a climber's paste-up of space, place and perception*, 2010, ink on paper, details of installation view – western wall

3c. Larger gallery space: Northern wall

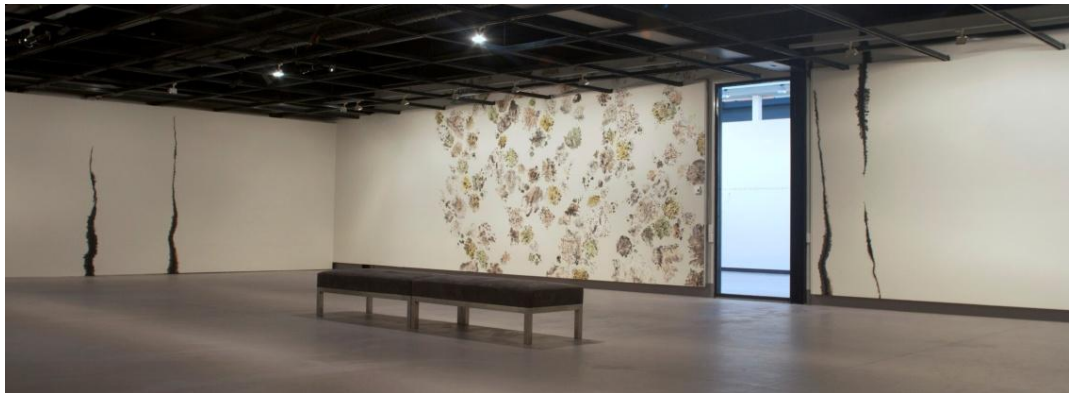


Figure 24: *Constructing vertical visions: a climber's paste-up of space, place and perception*, 2010, ink on paper, details of installation view – northern wall



Figure 25: *Constructing vertical visions: a climber's paste-up of space, place and perception*, 2010, ink on paper, details of installation view – northern wall



Figure 26: *Constructing vertical visions: a climber's paste-up of space, place and perception, 2010, ink on paper, details of installation view – northern wall*



Figure 27: *Constructing vertical visions: a climber's paste-up of space, place and perception, 2010, ink on paper, details of installation view – northern wall*



Figure 28: *Constructing vertical visions: a climber's paste-up of space, place and perception, 2010*, ink on paper, details of installation view – northern wall



Figure 29: *Constructing vertical visions: a climber's paste-up of space, place and perception, 2010*, ink on paper, details of installation view – northern wall



Figure 30: *Constructing vertical visions: a climber's paste-up of space, place and perception*, 2010, ink on paper, details of installation view – northern wall



Figure 31: *Constructing vertical visions: a climber's paste-up of space, place and perception*, 2010, ink on paper, details of installation view – northern wall



Figure 32: *Constructing vertical visions: a climber's paste-up of space, place and perception*, 2010, ink on paper, details of installation view – northern wall

3d. Larger gallery space: Eastern wall



Figure 33: *Constructing vertical visions: a climber's paste-up of space, place and perception*, 2010, ink on paper, details of installation view – eastern wall

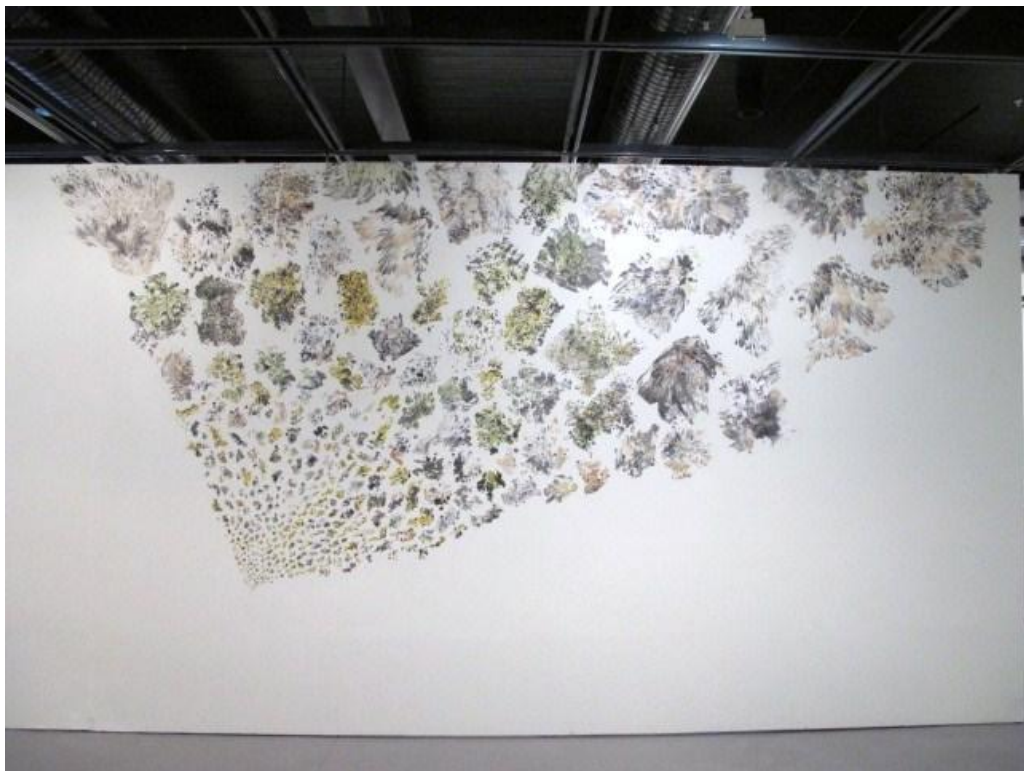


Figure 34: *Constructing vertical visions: a climber's paste-up of space, place and perception*, 2010, ink on paper, details of installation view – eastern wall



Figure 35: *Constructing vertical visions: a climber's paste-up of space, place and perception, 2010*, ink on paper, details of installation view – eastern wall



Figure 36: *Constructing vertical visions: a climber's paste-up of space, place and perception, 2010*, ink on paper, details of installation view – eastern wall



Figure 37: *Constructing vertical visions: a climber's paste-up of space, place and perception, 2010, ink on paper, details of installation view – eastern wall*



Figure 38: *Constructing vertical visions: a climber's paste-up of space, place and perception, 2010, ink on paper, details of installation view – eastern wall*